The Old Cevenol

RABAUT SAINT-ETIENNE

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old Cevenol
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The Old Cevenol

By

RABAUT SAINT-ETIENNE

Translated from the French

By

ALFRED E. SEDDON

CINCINNATI, O.
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1911

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PREFACE

I am glad that the editor of the CHRISTIAN STANDARD proposes to publish such literature as will acquaint Christians in America with the noble struggles of French Christians against the Papacy. There are two periods especially that will form instructive and timely reading. The period of the Albigensian persecution, and the period during the validity of the Edict of Nantes, and for a hundred years subsequent to its revocation.

The story of "The Old Cevenol" is one of the most popular works in the Sunday-school libraries of the Protestant churches of France. It was written by Rabaut Saint-Etienne, a famous and eloquent Protestant preacher, and the son of a preacher—Paul Rabaut—whose faithful ministry to "The Church of the Desert," as a colleague of that apostolic man, Antoine Court, marks him as one of the most valiant of the heroic defenders of the faith in those tragic days. The first edition of the book was published about ten years before the great French Revolution, and consequently during a period when the infamous persecuting laws stained the statute-book of France. "The Old Cevenol" is a story. Ambroise Borely is a fictitious hero, but the story is a faithful description of the experiences endured by Christians in France under the "Revocation." I believe the book has been translated into English. I have not seen the English edition. I have found both pleasure

and profit in translating it myself, and this independent translation will avoid all possible interference with any rights that may exist of the English translator. The edition from which I translate is edited by Pastor Charles Dardier, published by the *Societe des livres religieux* at Toulouse, and is dated 1893. The editor closes his preface with the following words, which are almost as appropriate in America as in France:

> In publishing the present volume, we have had special regard to the young Protestants of our own day. They are the hope of our churches, and we trust they will find in this work not only interest, but also profit. The circumstances in the midst of which they are growing up are not, thank God, as tragic as formerly; but they are always solemn, sometimes difficult. It is not well that they should forget, or be ignorant of, the spiritual legacy that our fathers have bequeathed to us, at the price of their blood

ALFRED E. SEDDON.

ECOLE BIBLIQUE, Vanves (Seine), France, 1910.

THE OLD CEVENOL

By Rabaut Saint-Etienne.

[Translated from the French by Alfred E. Seddon.]

CHAPTER I.

The London papers have made known to the world the death of Sieur Ambroise Borely, who was born in the Cevennes, the 10th March, 1671, and died at London the 14th September, 1774, at the great age of 103 years, 7 months and 4 days. The most ordinary name becomes so celebrated, when he who bears it reaches such an advanced age, as to be the envy of mortals; but there were special circumstances in the life of Borely which add to this natural interest; circumstances which moved his friend—Mr. William Chesterman, good citizen of Spring Garden—to gather together anecdotes of his life. This book having fallen into our hands, we read it, we were interested, and we translated it into French, using that honest liberty that every translator ought to have, to dress up the foreigner in the fashion of his own country. We shall faithfully reproduce this interesting and singular history.

Ambroise Borely was born in the Cevennes. His father was a good, honest citizen of that country. He was the eldest of seven children. His father was moderately well-to-do and lived in simple fashion, looking after his farm, going hunting occasionally on foot followed by a single

dog, dining once or twice a week with his friends, regularly attending preaching on Sundays, quietly enjoying the present without anxiety as to the future. At that time Louis XIV. was astonishing all Europe with his magnificence and his glory. Nothing seemed to hinder his good fortune or to successfully resist his arms. His generals and his ministers were all that he could wish. The brilliant entertainments given at his court were like the enchantments of fairyland. One might almost say the mountains became plains before him, for everywhere his will was anticipated and executed with a promptitude that was perfectly marvelous.

As is well known, those who were around him took advantage of his impetuosity to obtain his authority for the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. He was the kind of monarch to obtain such a concession from. He loved to attain his end and had no scruples about the means employed, and he insisted that his commands should be instantly obeyed. A patriotic Englishman has no occasion to complain of a measure that has proved so advantageous to his country, and, as a good citizen, I can not but hope that in France they may continue to imagine that this revocation is an admirable stroke of policy.

The day having been fixed on which everybody should be requested to become converted, troops were immediately sent forth to back up that request. All France knew what prodigies had been wrought by the soldiers, and when, in the little town where Hyacinthe Borely, father of Ambroise, lived, they learned that two battalions of missionaries had arrived, there was a general alarm. The commanding officer did his duty in fine style. He summoned the inhabitants to meet on the public square, and he there informed them that he had come to convert them, and that he proposed to do so with the aid of the honest men who

had come with him. He trusted they would not oppose the wishes of the king, but, if they were obstinate and refused to return to the bosom of the church, they would be persuaded to do so by sundry pains and calamities. Many of his hearers found this short sermon so eloquent that they did not hesitate for one moment to do all that the commander advised, but a great number of obstinate persons closed their eyes to the dazzling light that beamed from the arguments of this missionary and refused to be converted. It was then that a free rein was given to the soldiers to proceed in their work of conversion, who, for the great good of the heretics, tortured them with all the fury with which the demons torture the damned.

You would hardly believe what Ambroise used to tell about the deeds of which he had been witness and which were reported on all sides. The soldiers were permitted to do just what they pleased, provided, it was said, that they did not kill the people. But they sometimes found it difficult to place such restraint on their zeal as, after conducting their victims to the very threshold of the tomb, to prevent them stepping over it. They heaped violence on violence. They poured boiling water in the mouths of some; they stripped others naked and stretched them in front of a fire and turned them as on a spit; they made others hold red-hot coals in their closed hands. In each house was found a different kind of torture, according to the inventive genius of those who undertook the work of conversion. Here they plunged people down a well, there they stuck pins down the finger-nails of the heretics, or they sprinkled gunpowder in the ears of people and fired it. They put the naked legs of some in boots filled with grease, and then stood them before a fierce fire until they fell fainting. They rubbed salt and vinegar into the wounds they had made; they dropped hot melted tallow

into eyes, and, in a word, whatever torture human barbarity has invented during centuries was practiced here.

All the laws of modesty and of nature were violated by the unbridled soldiery, who, in other campaigns, had been taught, and even commanded, to commit acts of most striking injustice. From nursing mothers they took their infants, leaving them to be distressed by the accumulation of milk in their breasts. Sometimes they would tie the mother to a bedpost and place the infant a little distance off, so that the distress of the infant might increase the distress of the mother. The towns resounded with the frantic cries of victims in agony, the profanity of the soldiers and the cries and moans of the Huguenots. The remotest deserts no longer served for an asylum; they were chased like wild beasts, bringing back the fugitives to expose them to a thousand tortures.

The most outrageous pillage accompanied these barbarities. Furniture, utensils, provisions were thrown out into the street. The soldiers stabled their horses in the parlors, and made litters for them with articles of silk and cotton, or on sheets of Holland cloth. The soldiers amused themselves by feeding their horses with the provisions from the family larder, whilst they left the families to suffer the horrors of famine. Such scenes, being enacted at the same time in all the houses in the town, would lead one to believe that France had been delivered over to a band of cannibals. After the art of conversion had been brought to perfection by a year of practice, it came to form a part of the regular military discipline. The officer gave his orders for the tortures, and the soldier who betrayed any weakness was punished. Under such a condition of things all hearts seemed to become insensible to pity, and the minds of men were possessed with madness. Thus it came to pass that France, in what has been called her best days, presented

to mankind an exhibition more outrageous than the scenes of "The Spanish Fury" in America. Even the day of St. Bartholomew was less horrible and less dishonorable, for that was just one day, and the court which gave the orders countermanded them two days later; but the delirium of the Revocation lasted for several years, and if it is true, as we are assured, that the laws which authorized it have still their apologists in France, it is evident that this madness has prevailed for a century.

Scenes like these being enacted in the town where Hyacinthe Borely lived, you will well understand that he was not spared. When his provisions had been consumed, his wife, although about again to become a mother, was driven out of her home, followed by her weeping children. She took refuge in the home of one of her sisters, which, at that moment, was not occupied by the dragoons. Hyacinthe Borely, going to get the keys of his abandoned home, was arrested by the soldiers, tied up to the chimney and treated so cruelly that he expired before the day was out. Ambroise was tied to the foot of the bed, where, helplessly, he wept as he beheld the agony of his dying father. After awhile the work of conversion had sufficiently advanced in the town. Everybody was either Roman Catholic, or dead, or fled to the woods, or shut up in dungeons. So the troops went on their way to another town, just as if nothing had happened. They would report to King Louis XIV. that everybody had been converted, and the king believed it to be a fact. It is a matter of historic record that, at that period, the king would, at his *levee*, report to the assembled courtiers the rapidity with which the work of conversion went forward, and congratulate himself on the extreme ease with which the work was accomplished.

CHAPTER II.

Hardly had the troops retired from the town, than the Protestants returned to their former religious beliefs. Many of them had fled in order to escape the penalties they had been condemned to. Some of these were arrested at the frontier and condemned to death or to lifelong imprisonment. Others, known to have returned to their heresies, were transported. Thus, within the space of two months, this little town (prior to this time very populous) was reduced to about a third of its former population.

The mother of Ambroise, who had kept in hiding, came back with her children to her home. She tried to save something from the ruin of her fortune. She made arrangements with new renters, for the old ones had been ruined. She bought a few articles of furniture; no very difficult matter, for so many people had fled from their homes, and, keeping herself quietly hidden in her own home, succeeded for some time in escaping the vigilance of the priests. It was in these moments of tranquility that she commenced to realize most bitterly the depth of her own sorrow, for until then it had seemed to be drowned in the general consternation. She found herself alone, robbed of a tender, virtuous and much-beloved husband and protector, with the responsibility of a large family of young children, and separated from many of her relatives and most intimate friends who had fled to foreign lands. She was, moreover, deprived of the necessary means to provide for the wants of her family. Great troubles make great souls. The souls that are not crushed by afflictions rise by

them, and nothing contributes more to sustain our strength than to feel that we are strong. The widow of Hyacinthe Borely realized that her only resource was her own courage. She faced her misfortunes boldly. She found in the very cares that her family required the energy for new efforts.

There was, however, one kind of evil against which she had no defense. Her children were the only consolation left to her, and she trembled lest they should be taken away from her. Those were times when natural law was ignored, and led to the violation of all law. People seemed to think that everything was lawful to compel people to enter heaven according to the ideas of the Church of Rome. As a consequence, the greatest injustice was practiced, on the plea that it was the greatest love. What seems to us most cruel was held by the church to be most humane and just. To snatch a child from its parents was an act of benevolence. These principles had been affirmed by solemn laws, which France appears to honor and cherish, since she still retains them on her statute-book.

These fears that oppressed the heart of Ambroise's mother urged her to seek the means of escaping them. She believed that she could not do better than, by her instructions, to arm them against the evils that threatened them. Ambroise, the eldest, profited especially by her teaching, and she had the joy of perceiving in him, with the features of his father, of whom he reminded her, the same character and indications of the same virtues.

CHAPTER III.

Ambroise was now nearly fifteen, yet he knew no trade. He could read and write very well, thanks to the care of his mother and the attention that his uncle had given to his education. He had been taught to fear God and to do good to his fellow-men. He was honest, outspoken and generous. He had an attractive appearance and his face gave indication of the goodness of his heart. With such talents and habits as he gave evidence of, there seemed to be no career in life that he might not aspire to. It was time now that he should think about his future, and indeed the matter occupied his thoughts very seriously. But he found the choice of a profession a difficult problem. However, as his grandfather had been a great lawyer, and as this profession was one very highly respected, especially in small towns, he first of all decided to follow that profession. So he called on a lawyer whom he knew in order to tell him of his intentions and to consult him about the matter. He thought perhaps that his friend might be willing to take him into his office, where he might learn the first principles of the profession. The lawyer was exceedingly kind to Ambroise, but told him that the profession of the law was forbidden to Protestants, and consequently by studying the law he would only be losing valuable time which he might more profitably employ in some other profession. The young man was surprised to hear this, and greatly disappointed thus to find his ambitions thwarted, but he replied that if the career of a lawyer was not open to him, he would at least like to be a procurator or notary, and that he would

be glad to serve his apprenticeship in his friend's office. The lawyer told him that even that could not be; that there were several royal decrees forbidding to Protestants the professions of procurator and notary, and, what is more, he would not even be allowed to take Ambroise as a clerk in his office, as there was another statute forbidding lawyers to employ Protestant clerks, under a penalty of a fine of one thousand livres. "My friend," said he finally, "give up the idea of entering the law and of wearing the black robe; the law does not permit you to be even a bailiff, a sergeant, a constable, or so much as a bailiff's man: the sanctuary of justice must not in any way be contaminated by heresy." Ambroise, who had a good deal of sense for his years, thought it was very singular that Protestant opinions should disqualify a man from studying the quirks of the law. He was so tickled at the absurdity of it that, for the moment, he forgot his disappointment and went out of the office roaring with laughter. "Well," said he to himself, "if I can not be a lawyer, I will be a doctor; for, after all, it is a better thing to devote one's life to healing the sicknesses of men than to be everlastingly occupied with their quarrels and follies."

With this thought in his mind, Ambroise went straight to the house of a doctor, and was still laughing as he told of his adventure with the lawyer. He told the doctor that he was really not sorry for this disappointment caused by the royal proclamations, since it had led him to turn his attention to a profession infinitely more noble and useful. The physician agreed with Ambroise that his was the noblest of all professions. "The more noble and lofty character of our profession," said he, "makes it incumbent on us to have great care to keep clear of all miserable heretics who, by their erroneous opinions, would contaminate the pure truthfulness of the physician's soul. For that reason,

Pere la Chaise and Monseigneur de Louvois have ordained that, in order to be a good doctor, one must be a Catholic." Ambroise naturally inquired if Esculapius, Hippocrates and Galen were Catholics. "No," replied the doctor, "they were pagans, and I can not understand why God permitted them to attain such skill in their profession, but then that happened in the age of miracles, and, since the age of miracles is past, it is perfectly clear that only Catholics can possibly be competent doctors. Moreover, there is a royal decree making it unlawful to call in a Protestant physician to a sick person. Yes, my friend, it is dated the 6th of August, 1685, and it furnishes an admirable proof of the wisdom of Pere la Chaise, for, between ourselves, I personally do not see why a Protestant could not be a lawyer. In order to judge whether a thing is good or bad, it does not matter what a man's religion is, but a Protestant physician is nothing less than a social plague. If, for instance, there were any Protestant physicians here, that would be the source of two evils. First, I might perhaps be less frequently called in to attend the sick; that itself would be a public calamity, and, secondly, since the profession of lawyer is forbidden to the Protestants, the number of physicians of the so-called reformed religion would increase to such an extent that very few Catholics would follow that fine profession. Now, it is easy to see how disastrous that would be to the public health, because the physicians of the so-called reformed religion would hardly take the trouble to notify the sick of their serious condition, so that the priest might be called in to administer the sacraments. This is the principal reason for the prohibition of Protestant physicians, alleged in the king's decreee. The great piety of the Reverend Pere la Chaise constrains him, in his wisdom, to secure the salvation of the faithful. It is not that he wishes to aggrandize his society; that has never been

the object of the Jesuits. He does not take earthly things into consideration; he turns his thoughts toward heaven, and he fain would constrain you to enter there in spite of yourselves. As for myself, I approve of this proclamation of the king with all my heart; before it was published I was starving. There were three old quacks who were doing all the business; they have fled to Holland or to England, and now I am left alone; the sick must apply to me."

Ambroise was surprised to find that laws which can only be good in so far as they contribute to the general well-being, are judged by individuals to be good just in so far as they favor personal interest. He also was surprised to find that it was necessary to be a Catholic in order to be permitted to heal the sick. "If I were sick," said he, "I should not ask what is the religion of my doctor. I should simply ask if he is skillful. Pere la Chaise seems to have reason for thinking otherwise."

Whilst reflecting thus, Ambroise left the doctor, and, as his head was filled with the many fine things that had been said about the medical profession, he took a notion to go into a drugstore. "Here," said he, "I shall not find the same difficulties; apothecaries are not consulted by sick people, and, consequently, they would not be in a position to hinder them from receiving the sacrament. The sale of drugs and the distribution of remedies have not any influence whatever on matters of faith and salvation, and the Jesuits, who are so concerned about the everlasting happiness of souls, can hardly find a pretext for depriving us of this modest profession. It is true, it is not quite so honorable. I would certainly rather give orders than execute them; write prescriptions than mix them up; but since my religion excludes me from the honors, I must submit myself to destiny."

He had scarcely finished these reflections when he found

himself in front of an apothecary's shop. His decision was taken. He entered the store and presented himself to the apothecary in a most courteous manner. The man of drugs asked him what he wanted. Ambroise frankly told him what he had come for, explaining his embarrassment; how, not being permitted to be either lawyer, or procurator, or sheriff's officer, or notary, or assessor, or attorney, or sergeant, or constable, or doctor, he had called to find out whether it would be possible for him to be an apothecary. He explained with childlike innocence the reasons that led him to believe that a Protestant could sell drugs without imperiling the eternal salvation of his neighbors; but he soon found out that he was mistaken.

"What! another royal proclamation!" cried poor Ambroise.

"Well, very nearly so, my friend. There is an edict of the king, dated the 15th September, 1685, which forbids all surgeons and apothecaries of the so-called reformed religion to exercise their arts."

"But what can be the reason of this prohibition?"

"It is that, as apothecaries are sometimes called in to see sick people, probably five or six times a year, and as they have some acquaintance with theology, they *might*, by their arguments, *keep Protestants from embracing the Catholic religion*. Thus it is prudent, having regard to the salvation of the sick, that none but Catholics should be permitted to approach them."

Ambroise, who had already anticipated this reply, said: "If that is so, and those that surround the sick person must be Catholics, his servants should be Catholics also."

"Doubtless," replied the apothecary. "In fact, there exists a royal decree that forbids the adherents of the so-called reformed religion employing any other than Catholics as domestic servants. The infraction of this law involves a

penalty of a fine of one thousand livres for the employer, and the punishment for the servant is more severe. If a man, he is sent to the galleys; if a woman, she is whipped and branded with a *fleur de lys*. You can readily see how necessary this is. The Catholic servant is a spy in the Protestant household, and can reveal everything that goes on in the family to the priest at the confessional, and the Jesuits will not fail to report everything of importance to Pere la Chaise."

"Pere la Chaise again," said Ambrose. "And it is he who draws up all these royal proclamations?"

"Yes, my friend; that shows his zeal for the salvation of souls. It is on that account that he takes so many precautions to stamp out heresy. It is for this reason that all Protestant midwives are forbidden to exercise their profession by royal declaration. It is true that, in some localities, there are none but Protestant midwives, and several women, in giving birth to a child, have died for lack of help, but then that is only temporal death; it is not eternal death, and the state looks on temporal death as a very small matter. As you see, there are still people left behind in the country, in spite of the great numbers that have been killed and who have fled the country. It was formerly believed that the strength of an empire consisted in its population, but that fallacy is now exploded. The Jesuits have proved that a state can not fail to be prosperous if the king's confessor is a Jesuit, and if the state is respectfully submissive to the will of Rome."

"I see," said Ambroise. "So the kingdom of England must necessarily perish, and the English can never gain the victory over us."

"They have beaten us, it is true, latterly," said the apothecary, "but that was to punish us for our sins, and to prevent us from falling into that sinful pride which they exhibit

after their victories. His Holiness, the pope, tells us that, if they triumph on the earth, we shall triumph in heaven."

Ambroise had met with so many rebuffs during the day that he began to feel extremely exhausted. He was so oppressed by the difficulties that surrounded him, and so preoccupied with his own gloomy thoughts, that he hardly listened to the apothecary's further remarks, and walked out of the store with less politeness than he had entered. He went home greatly perplexed as to what he could do. "Well, never mind," said he to himself, "I must not be discouraged. Maybe there are still two or three professions left. Who knows but what there may be still some means left to live in the world without being either a physician, or surgeon, or accoucheur, or apothecary, or lawyer, or procurator, or notary, or sheriff's officer, or sergeant, or bailiff's man, or purveyor to the king, or director, or comptroller, or clerk, or constable, or servant, or steward of ecclesiastical property, etc., etc., etc.

Poor Ambroise and his coreligionists were in a bad case. It is true that to admit a Protestant to the right to marry, or to enter into any of the prohibited callings, all that was necessary was to comply with some Catholic rite, which compliance might be attested by witnesses who were often most unscrupulous, and a certificate of orthodoxy could be purchased at very small cost. But the sad consequence of such a condition of things was that all the places, the honors, the rights of citizenship, all places of public confidence and responsibility, were available to the Protestant who violated his conscience, or for those who considered all religious observance as unmeaning ceremony, whilst the man of tender conscience, or of soul too lofty to stoop to even the shadow of a falsehood, was the man who had to bear the penalty of his integrity. His nobility of soul was the cause of his being dealt with as a criminal.

CHAPTER IV.

Our young Cevenol slept very little that night. He lay awake trying to solve the difficult question of the choice of a profession. Amongst the few careers which remained open to him he seemed most disposed to the military profession. As soon as his mother began to stir, he went into her room and told her of all his disappointments of the previous day, and the embarrassment in which he found himself as to the choice of a profession. He asked her what she thought about the army, and whether he might not, with wisdom and courage, in the profession of arms, succeed in obtaining promotion. At any rate, the army was not closed against Protestants.

"I hope, my son," said his mother, "that in the choice of a profession you will do nothing without consulting me. I want to leave you perfectly free to make your own choice, but you have need of my experience. It is advice, not commands, that I would give you. Whilst it is perfectly true that the military profession is not directly forbidden to Protestants, yet the king has made it known that he proposes to reserve his favors for Catholics alone. Now, as the favors of a prince ought never to be other than acts of justice and rewards for service, it is as though he had declared that he does not intend to reward the services of his Protestant subjects. You see, therefore, that, in the army, you could never expect any promotion, and, as a matter of fact, the Protestant officers who are now in the army are all languishing in subordinate positions. The way they have been treated has resulted in disgusting them with the service

altogether, and this, added to the persecution of their people, has led many of them to flee into foreign countries which now can boast several regiments composed exclusively of valiant Frenchmen."

[The translator of this story, not willing to trouble his readers with footnotes, will, from time to time, embody in the text occasional valuable items not found in the original text. At this point, for instance, the French editor of the work has made the following remark: "How many brave soldiers, highly educated engineers, good officers, great captains, have passed over to the enemy and carried with them their tribute of valor and skill! Such, for instance, as the Schombergs, the Galloways, the Chanclos, the Deshayes, the Dumoulins, the Ligoniers, and many others. How many people, born for other callings, have been forced to abandon them, and, in despair, have turned against their country. To be just, we can not altogether blame them for the evils they have done. Does not the blame belong rather to those who robbed them of their goods and their honors and tortured their bodies?"]

The good mother, resuming her advice to her son, said: "You must also take into account, my dear boy, the inevitable unpleasantnesses with your comrades and the disputes in which you would surely be involved on the score of your religion. The folly of the Government in persecuting the Protestants has again aroused the social animosities that had almost died out. The question of personal interest would occasionally come in to embitter the situation. You would find comrades mean enough to take advantage of your religion to secure their own advancement at your expense. And, again, remember, my son, if you enter the service, you must make up your mind some day to be the perpetrator of the atrocities that have brought desolation to your own unfortunate family. You have seen the king's

soldiers inundate this province. The day will come when you may be put in garrison in these desolated cantons, a barbarous superior officer will take a pleasure in commanding you to execute cruel orders against your own brothers; you could not execute them without groaning. You, a brave man, would be sent against unarmed people; you would have to do duty as constable and executioner. You would see your fellow-soldiers (who ought to have no other task than to repel the enemies of their country) rage in their fury against old men, women and children. You would be forced to be a witness of these barbarities, and, as you turn away with a sigh, you would say: 'It is thus that I formerly saw my own family tormented; it was to such evils as these that my own venerable father succumbed.'"

Ambroise could no longer endure the awful vision that his mother's words conjured up before his imagination. He cried out and begged his mother to say no more, and protested vehemently that at once and forever he renounced all thought of military service; "but tell me what to do," said he. "You see my embarrassment. Several times I have entertained the thought of leaving my ungrateful country, but the thought of leaving you here alone in this proscribed land has always turned me from that purpose; my troubles seem lighter when I share them with you; voices not unworthy bid me go, but others even more noble bid me stay."

The mother replied: "If you possess that courage that is so necessary to persons that are in an unfortunate position, you would feel that every profession is honorable to the man that pursues it honorably."

"I know," said Ambroise, "that I shall have to lower my ambitions, and it will cost me something to do it; but, if I keep my religion and my conscience, I shall have gained everything. Unfortunates such as we can not afford to indulge in dreams of ambition; let me but live to to be your

consolation, for that from now shall be my highest ambition."

"That is the reply I expected of you, my dear boy. Yes, you will have to take to some trade, and in your choice you must consult your circumstances and your conscience. You know M. de S——; he is a friend to us; ask his advice, and, whatever happens, never lose sight of your duty to God, to your religion and to the most loving of mothers."

Ambroise went out to consult his friend, who very much astonished him by informing him that there was hardly any respectable profession that was not forbidden to Protestants. They could not be either printers or booksellers or goldsmiths, and as for the manual trades, they also were forbidden, although in an indirect manner. He would find it difficult to find an artisan who would be willing to take a Protestant as an apprentice, for the ordinances were very severe on that point. Protestant artisans were forbidden to take apprentices of their own sect, and it was presumed that young Protestants would not be willing to enter into the service of a Catholic master.

"Explain to me, I beg you," said Ambroise, "the reason of all these unjust laws. I can not believe that the king knows of all these iniquities, and that, of his own free will, he issues proclamations restraining the liberties of his subjects, reducing them to beggary and compelling them to leave the country."

"I will tell you," replied his friend. "As a matter of fact, the king does not know half the cruelties that are committed in his name, and maybe he closes his eyes to the injustice of the other half. It is unfortunate for him that he knows so little of the true interests of his people, and that he does not realize that, in permitting these useless outrages, he is in fact casting dishonor on one of the most glorious reigns known to history, and that he is causing the

wealth and glory of his country to pass over to the enemy. But what is most deplorable of all is that, whilst the whole of Europe clearly sees that the Jesuits are the authors of all these vexations, our king is so blind that he can not perceive it."

Ambroise joined with his friend in deploring the weakness of kings and the misfortunes of the people. "Must I, then," he asked, "be deprived of a trade and die of starvation, in order that the Jesuits may gain control of all the known world?"

"All resources are not closed against you," said his friend; "the way of commerce is still open to you. Monseigneur de Louvois has evidently overlooked that, and I can foresee that the Protestants—unfortunate and ruined as they are to-day—will one day cause the towns and the provinces where they settle to flourish and prosper. Commerce is honest and useful. It may be that you will be able some day in business to make good the losses which a hard persecution has inflicted upon you."

Acting on the advice of his friend, Ambroise engaged himself with a business man, to whom he greatly endeared himself by his conduct and his agreeable manners.

The prophecy of Ambroise's friend has been fulfilled. Protestants saved the business of France. The principal merchants of Bordeaux, Lyons and Marseilles, the most famous bankers of Paris, are Protestants. Protestants are carrying on the finest silk manufactories of Languedoc. These useful and oppressed subjects applied themselves to industry all over the kingdom, whilst their brothers who took refuge in England contributed to carry to perfection their art in the land of their exile, so that the foreign productions soon became the object of our emulation and envy.

CHAPTER V.

We have seen how devotedly attached to her religion was the mother of young Ambroise. This devoted attachment to religious opinions has been called fanaticism. And, as a matter of fact, can anything be more absurd than not to change one's opinion when invited to do so by a brigade of cavalry or by a troop of dragoons? It is the easiest thing in the world to adopt a sentiment utterly opposed to one entertained for forty or fifty years, and it is as clear as day that, although nature, governments and education may have contributed to make us see things in a different light, a prince has only to lift his finger in order that a hundred million subjects, if he have so many, should straightway think just as he does. According to Bayle, an ancient poet has said: "The gods make use of men as balls to play tennis with." The kings of England appear to do the same thing with the souls of their subjects, for, last century, within the space of thirty years, they changed the state religion four times.

The editor of the edition from which this translation is made adds to the foregoing sarcasm a little sarcasm of his own, when he says: "A writer as celebrated as Bayle calls attention to the same fact, thus: 'When we study closely the history of this great kingdom (England), and particularly the most recent reigns, and observe how easily grown kings, young princes and queens have overturned and established religions, and when we consider the incredible facility with which Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary and Elizabeth overturned the religion of the people again and again, one can not but blame the people for being too

submissive, for thus placing both their faith and their conscience under the yoke.' It appears that this writer did not think, as do others of his own church, that the people ought to submit their consciences to the will of a prince. And yet observe, dear reader, that it is a churchman who thus speaks, none other than the great Bossuet, in his funeral oration on the death of the queen of England." Here the translator would like to add his remark. Bossuet in his statement betrays a very inadequate conception of the real attitude of Englishmen towards the theological vagaries of Henry VIII. It is estimated that seventy thousand Englishmen and Englishwomen surrendered their lives rather than their consciences during the reign of Henry, and during the short reign of his daughter Mary so many were martyred for conscience' sake as to brand that queen with the title of "Bloody Mary." It is quite remarkable how clearly the Papist can grasp the principle of the divine right of the freedom of the human conscience when he fancies it tells in his favor, but how utterly blind he is to it when it applies to one not a member of the Church of Rome! Protestants were being persecuted in France at the very time that Bossuet was blaming the English people for being too submissive to their kings in the matter of religion; yet there does not appear to be on record a single word of protest from Bossuet against the cruel persecutions by his own church and right under his nose.

But we will now return to our story. According to this incontestible principle—the right of a king to coerce the consciences of his subjects—it is very evident that the prince has a perfect right to hang everybody who clings to opinions and prejudices they imbibed with their mother's milk. Obstinacy of opinion is, according to the doctrine of divine right, a crime punishable with death. I am very

glad to be able to state these unquestionable principles, because by them alone can the laws be justified about which I am going to speak. Otherwise one might be misled by a weak compassion or by some compunctions on the score of justice. There are a good many tender-hearted and justice-loving people nowadays who otherwise might be misled.

Ambroise had brothers and sisters younger than himself, and the mother, seeing her success in educating her eldest son, devoted herself with increasing ardor to the education of the others. This education was necessarily limited to such teaching as she could give them at home, and had for its main object their training to become good citizens and to teach them the same principles which she herself held to be so dear. There was a certain old man who lived in that part of the country—Claude Upokrites by name—who held a fine office. His duty was to denounce people who stubbornly held to their own opinions and to hand them over to the executioner. His honest rewards came out of the spoils from his victims. Full of holy avarice, this charitable inquisitor hunted up delinquents with great zeal, and, owing to the auspicious character of the country in which he operated, there was no lack of opportunity for him to display his great zeal. He was not slow to perceive that Ambroise's mother sent none of her children either to the school or to the mass, and that, in these respects, she was violating the king's ordinances. He caused her to be condemned to pay the fines prescribed in the king's declarations. The mother paid them gladly, happy thus to be able to purchase the right to educate her own children. But these fines were repeated and cruelly increased from time to time, terribly dissipating her little possessions. The superiors of religious establishments, irritated by the stubborn resistance of this woman,

had recourse to the king's edict which applied to her case. There was an edict which declared that widows who persisted in the "So-called Reformed Religion" a month after the publication of the decree should be deprived of all power to dispose in any way of their property, which should pass to their Catholic children, if they had any such, or, if they had not, to the nearest hospitals. "That is just the decree for this case," exclaimed the triumphant Upokrites; and soon the edict was executed. They took away from the mother the right to manage her own property, granting to her a pension barely sufficient to live upon, and, conformably with the other edict of the king, all her children were taken from her. They were shut up in convents in distant towns, where they were so well instructed and catechized and so regularly flogged, as to give ground for the hope that, in the course of a few years, they would make good Catholics. It is true that, on coming out of the convent, they fled into foreign countries; but at least the church had done what it could and had nothing to reproach itself for.

The desolate widow of the unfortunate Hyacinthe Borely ate the bread of tears and groaned night and day at the loss of her children. She was reduced to live in a miserable hovel with a few poor articles of furniture. She had but one consolation: that was to see Ambroise, who devoted to her all the time he could spare from his business. A new grief came to further crush her broken heart. Amongst her children was a beautiful little boy whom they had named Benjamin. Like the son of Jacob, he was the darling of his parents. This child was only seven and a half years old. He had been taken away with the others and placed in a convent six miles away from where his mother dwelt. Upokrites conceived the marvelous project of inducing this child to embrace the Catholic religion.

They made a great favorite of him at the convent; they gave him candies and pictures, and the little Benjamin, in the presence of a great crowd of the faithful, abjured his errors with such deep contrition that it brought tears to the eyes of all beholders, after which he was put in possession of his father's property. The mother, the brothers and the sisters were all dispossessed, in accordance with the king's edict. Upokrites was named guardian, and managed the property with such integrity and delicate regard to the feelings of the mother as can be easily imagined. The good widow said with a sigh: "A child of seven is not competent to make choice of a religion. Such a choice demands the exercise of vigorous reasoning faculties, and was altogether beyond the power of poor little Benjamin, who is still playing with his toys." But she was informed that she was mistaken, and that there was nothing more reasonable since the promulgation of the king's decree that children at the age of seven could abjure the "So-called Reformed Religion." "It is true," they admitted, "that in 1669 the king thought that children should not be permitted to abjure a religion before the age of fourteen, but Pere la Chaise claims now that a child of seven years has the intelligence that in former days was acquired by children of thirteen or fourteen years. The Jesuits also claim the same thing. Besides this, need one be astonished that, in a country where the vow of chastity is taken at the age of sixteen, a child at the age of seven should make a vow of absolute and implicit faith?" Of course there was nothing to say against the declarations of the king, the assertions of Claude Upokrites, and the profound arguments of Pere la Chaise. The poor widow was left alone with her tears. They reduced her pension and her misery was extreme, but she must suffer in silence.

In connection with the decree that robbed Protestant

parents of their young children, the editor appends the following note:

"The decree is dated January 12, 1686. Was there ever anything more unchristian and more tyrannical than to rob parents of their children? Fatal method, perpetuated up to our own days since the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. All the provinces have been thus desolated, but Poitou, Languedoc, Vivarais, Dauphiny, and especially the diocese of Bayeux in Normandy, furnish recent examples by the thousand. These executions were effected in the most terrible manner and gave rise to the most awful scenes. In order to intensify the horror of these captures, they were usually effected in the night. Without going into detail, it must suffice to give a general idea of these barbarities. I will refer to just one expedition, that of Sieur Houvet, cure of Athis in Normandy, and of his vicars, Verger and Grenier. Imagine these priests, followed by a band of constables, flying from parish to parish, besieging houses under cover of darkness, bursting the doors open with axes, and filling the air with frightful yells calculated to fill the boldest with terror. Imagine their satellites following them, sword in hand and blasphemy in their mouths, overturning and breaking everything in their way until they at length find the object of their search, which is destined to be the cause of many bitter tears. They would pounce upon their prey with the fury of wild beasts, snatching it away without giving time for dressing and regardless of the despairing cries of father and mother. With extreme inhumanity they repel, insult and strike the unhappy father and mother, who, seeing that which they hold as dearest in the world snatched away from them, are emboldened by their despair to make some vain efforts to save these precious objects of their tenderness and keep them for their love. These abductions caused such con-

sternation and aroused such alarm in all the cantons that more than a thousand families fled over to England, carrying with them whatever they could carry of their effects and money."

The following note is given respecting the law that transferred the property of a Protestant father to a Catholic child:

"By law dated June 17, 1681, Louis XIV. permitted the abjuration of children of seven years of age. He gave them authority to leave their parents' home and to enter action at law with their father, in order to oblige him to pay the child a pension. The law supposed, therefore, that a child of seven years is competent to choose between two religions which are subjects of dispute between the most learned theologians of Europe. The law permitted a child of seven to withdraw himself from his father's authority. A father ran the risk of losing his child forever if, by some needful severity in correcting his vicious tendencies, he aroused in the soul of the child a momentary spite. It is in such a way that the instigators of these laws disregarded the dictates of natural religion and the promptings of instinct."

CHAPTER VI.

One day when Ambroise was sitting at home with his mother, a friend entered. From the troubled look upon his face one could see at once that he was the bearer of evil tidings. Indeed, he had come as bearer of the sad intelligence that Ambroise's uncle had been arrested and taken to prison, and that, to all appearances, he would be condemned to the galleys. This uncle was an honest man who, at a time when many others were abjuring their Protestant faith, had yielded like the rest. He had had four drummers quartered on him, who sought his conversion by beating the drums at all hours of the day and night at his bedside, where he lay sick. For forty-eight hours he held out against this new species of torture; then they tried an improvement on their method. They procured a big tin boiler which they put over the sick man's head and hammered on it constantly. They would look at their patient from time to time to see the effect of these arguments, and if the conversion was progressing satisfactorily. At length they had the satisfaction of seeing that the drum argument had proved efficacious. The uncle of Ambroise, worn out with fatigue, promised to sign his abjuration, which he did with a trembling hand and then fainted away.

From that day the new convert was no longer troubled, since a signature so willingly given demonstrated, in the most satisfactory manner, that he was a good Catholic; but the poor man himself suffered such remorse on account of what he called his "fall" that he wept tears of penitence the rest of his days. The gentle Upokrites, whose official

position authorized him to poke his nose into everybody's business, entertained a pious grudge against this man, because his conduct gave no occasion for inflicting a fine. Upokrites had several complaints against him. It was a common practice in those happy days for the curate and the Upokrites of the parish to go visiting on Fridays and Saturdays among the suspected families, to find out if they were eating meat, and sometimes Ambroise's uncle had been found in fault. It is true that, as his health was delicate, he had procured a doctor's certificate, and therefore he could not lawfully be fined. There was another glorious custom, worthy of the splendid times in which our Cevenol lived. They would visit the homes of recent converts to the Church of Rome to take away their religious books. This ceremony was performed with military pomp, in order to show what soldiers were capable of doing. The drums were beaten all over the town, soldiers were picketed at the street crossings, and, after the search, the books that had been found were burned in the public square. People who were found to have concealed their books of devotion were punished severely, and good Catholics were so touched with the thought of these benevolent expeditions that they prayed God that the soldiers might find a large number of delinquents. The grievance that Upokrites had against Ambroise's uncle was not that he found in his house any religious books, but that he did not find any; for it must be confessed that the honest man had some faults, and that he was somewhat too eager for plunder. The hope of confiscations and fines made him capable of any meanness. Chance, which has now been proved to govern the world with so much intelligence, this time favored the holy greed of Upokrites. Some one happened to speak in his presence of the peculiarities of the uncle of Ambroise, and of his quiet, retired life, and declared that he was as much Prot-

estant as ever, and that he had heard him express deep regret for his abjuration. The gentle Upokrites, who always had the laws against heretics at his finger-ends, asked the speaker, in a careless sort of manner, who was with him when he heard these things. The speaker named two or three well-known persons. The triumphant Upokrites thereupon concocted a scheme which he straightway began to put in execution.

Here it becomes necessary to inform the reader of a remarkable decree of the king that bears the date of the 22d of March, 1690. This law forbids the new converts, who have once abjured the "So-called Reformed Religion," to dare to say that they are sorry for having done it, and this same ordinance of the king condemns to the galleys any one who shall have the audacity and the temerity to say that they are still Huguenots; and, lest the slow and stately march of justice should soften the severity of the penalty, by delaying it, the execution of it was entrusted to the Intendants. Moreover, observe, dear reader, that this ordinance, for which we are doubtless indebted to that holy man, Pere la Chaise, calls this retraction a crime, because, forsooth, it is a crime to retract when one is free what one has promised when persuaded thereto by the swords and pistols of dragoons. According to this ordinance, Ambroise's uncle was guilty. Upokrites had already received the deposition of the two witnesses who had overheard the remarks of the unfortunate man; and the very next day Jerome Borely was torn from the bosom of his family and placed in a dungeon. Such was the news that was brought to Ambroise and his mother.

You will readily imagine the grief of this poor widow. When a soul is cast down by sorrow, it needs only a little more affliction to overwhelm it entirely. It is the last stroke of the ax that brings down the oak which twenty

arms have attacked. This last stroke of misfortune proved too great for Ambroise's mother; it completely prostrated her. As for Ambroise himself, he was in despair. "What!" he cried with sobs, "my uncle, my dear uncle, my second father, snatched away from us, shut up in an infected dungeon and loaded with chains! My dear uncle, the most virtuous of men, condemned to pass the remainder of his days with the vilest criminals, and disgraced as though he were himself a criminal! And for what, great God! For having hated hypocrisy! What worse could he have deserved if, instead of being the best of men, he had been the worst and had dishonored his life with the most infamous crimes?" The poor boy yielded to a paroxysm of tears. Presently he began again to moan: "Oh, my poor uncle, you will never be able to stand the fatigue of the convict-gang, the violence of the sea and the detestable food! I fancy I can see you, stretched on the bowsprit, your back bared and near you the barbarous overseer, armed with a tarred rope. How can God allow such things to be among those made in his image?"

It may be necessary here to explain the frightful vision that was conjured up before the imagination of young Ambroise, and drove him nearly frantic with grief. So bitter was the zeal of the persecutors that the Protestant prisoners were treated worse than the actual criminals; the most fatiguing places and duties were allotted to them. If, at the elevation of the host, when the mass was celebrated on board the galleys, they did not bare their heads, they were stretched naked on the bowsprit, and an overseer, armed with a tarred rope, dipped in the sea-water, thrashed them with all his strength. The victims' ribs resounded with the violence of the strokes, and at each blow the skin was torn in bleeding shreds. They then carried away the victim, half dead, to the hospital, where he was cared for until he

was sufficiently healed to go through the awful experience again.

No wonder the boy was haunted, wherever he went, with the terrible vision of the sufferings that his good uncle would have to endure as a galley-slave. This frightful vision followed him wherever he went. Sometimes he indulged the hope that, by the intercession of friends, his uncle might be delivered from such a fatal destiny, and for a time this hope lessened his grief. At other times, losing all hope, he entertained the noble purpose of himself taking his uncle's place; for it seemed to him that his uncle was more necessary than himself to his dear mother. Ambroise's health was very seriously affected by these things, and doubtless he would have become seriously sick, had it not been for the lawyer who previously had given him good advice. No one knew better than this lawyer how to smooth down the holy severity of certain men, and how to purchase immunity from the most terrible fate. This lawyer succeeded in delivering Jerome Borely, but it was at the expense of his fortune. Upokrites had good occasion to be pleased with the financial arrangements proposed by the lawyer for the relief of Jerome Borely, whose family forgot their poverty in the joy of the liberty of its head. This joy, however, was of short duration.

Jerome Borely was working, on shares, a farm belonging to a neighboring convent. The prior would have considered it a great offense if a Protestant had refused to undertake such a charge. But it so happened that a royal edict, dated July 9, 1685, made it illegal for a Protestant to take such farms, and that for doing so a Protestant was liable to a fine of one thousand livres, besides heavy law expenses. Jerome Borely was attacked on this account. He might have justified himself by declaring that he was not a Protestant since he had abjured that faith; but his

conscience would not allow him to shield himself in that manner; he would have blushed at such an infamy. It was these scruples of conscience that were the cause of his undoing. His exhausted fortunes made it impossible for him to pay the fatal fine, so once more he was dragged to prison. For some time past he had had symptoms of disease; his strength gave way under this new trial, and he became seriously ill.

CHAPTER VII.

The good Ambroise was filled with sorrow at the sad condition of his uncle, and resolved, in order to deliver him, to sell off a little property of which he had recently come into possession. He said to himself: "My uncle is my father's brother; he cared for me during my childhood. When I had the misfortune to lose my dear father, my poor uncle mingled his tears with ours, and in the end he dried ours. He has fed me with bread from his own table. Now I have the power, I ought to repay to him the benefits I have received from him." Reasoning thus, Ambroise began to seek for a purchaser for his little property. His great anxiety to sell caused quite a number of particular friends to come forward with offers to purchase the property for one-half of its real value. Ambroise was himself so honest and sincere that he did not suspect that these pretended friends were just taking advantage of the situation, and he concluded a bargain with one of them, indulging the hope of soon seeing his uncle and of embracing him a thousand times. He was too joyful to sleep that night, and very early next morning he knocked at the door of a notary, asking with impatience to see the man of the law immediately on very pressing business. The notary, supposing that he was wanted in haste to draw up the will of a dying man, muttered a thousand maledictions on the profession that compelled him to sleep with his eyes open, the dying man who sent to disturb his slumbers, and the messenger who came after him. This thought, however, occupied only a portion of the intellectual fibers during the

process of regaining full use of his mental faculties. The other part of his half-awake faculties, long accustomed to respond with alacrity when his financial interests were concerned, urged him to dress with haste, lest the messenger might apply to another notary in the neighborhood, of which he was jealous. In the twinkling of an eye he had put on an old dressing-gown, and, rushing to the stairs, he appeared to Ambroise, with one foot in a slipper, the other in a shoe, and a large inkhorn in his hand.

"Well, my friend, what is it? Is he very sick?"

"Ah, sir, worse than I can tell you. His condition breaks my heart. Ah, my poor uncle, when shall I see him at rest?"

"For a nephew," said the notary, "you appear to be very much concerned. Well, tell me, have you consulted him?"

"I, sir, consult him? No, I want him to know nothing about it. I want to surprise him."

"But, my friend, he is the party interested; he must know."

"Ah, yes, of course, he will know when the thing is done, when he will be no longer in a position to raise any objection, when I shall be in a position to compel him to consent to sacrifices that he would never allow if I consulted him."

The notary began to think that he was talking either to a rascal or a madman, and it was not without considerable explanations that Ambroise succeeded in getting the notary to understand his intentions. He could not help admiring the generous disposition of the young man, and promised to register the contract for the sale as soon as Ambroise procured the necessary permission.

"What permission?" asked Ambroise; "I am of age. My father is dead; I am only too free."

"Are you not a Protestant?"

"Yes, sir, I am, but what has that to do with the sacrifices that I propose to make on my uncle's behalf?"

"It has this much to do, that you can not dispose of your property without a permission from the Intendant; that is, for properties up to the value of three thousand livres: for properties of greater value, the permission of the court is necessary. Now, your property being worth from four to five thousand livres, you will have to apply to the sub-delegate, who will write to the Intendant, who will reply to the sub-delegate, who will communicate the reply to you, and you will then know whether you are at liberty to dispose of your own property. It is true that, before you receive the information, your uncle will be dead, in all probability. It is also possible that, if the sub-delegate is not very favorably disposed towards you, his reply may not be satisfactory, or that your own relatives, in order to prevent you from alienating property on which they have cast their eyes, may write some anonymous letters to frustrate your purpose. There are also many other things that might happen, but these are the little annoyances that a good citizen will suffer with patience because of the great good and honor that he personally derives from the state. For you ought to understand, my dear Ambroise, that when citizens are thus annoyed in their affairs it is really good for them, and that the happiness of an empire consists in this, that the subjects should become fully persuaded that the free possession of their property is nothing more than a chimera."

The notary was proceeding to discourse at great length, when he perceived the tears starting into the eyes of Ambroise as he made a thousand lamentations for his unfortunate uncle, whom he seemed to mourn as though he were already dead. The notary did the best he could to

console the young man, and did in fact succeed in comforting him to some degree, for the heart of an unfortunate is always open to hope. Ambroise decided to see the sub-delegate, who lived twelve miles away. He went, but found that the sub-delegate had left the previous day for Montpellier, and that he would not return before the end of the week. On learning this, the young Cevenol was extremely depressed, but what use is it to struggle against destiny? One murmurs, but one submits all the same. Everybody who saw the unhappy Ambroise, advised him to exercise patience, to await the return of the sub-delegate and to hope in Providence. After well considering the situation, he came to the conclusion that that was the best thing that he could do.

CHAPTER VIII.

As Ambroise awaited the end of the longest week he had ever known, he sought a relief for his sorrow by making frequent visits to his uncle, the unhappy cause of it. His mind was possessed but with one single idea, the deliverance of his uncle. A famous lawyer lived in the little town, and Ambroise made up his mind to consult this eminent man. "I will see for myself," said he, "this declaration of the king; who knows, perhaps there may be some way of evading it and of saving the life of my uncle?" The lawyer confirmed all that the notary had said, and convinced Ambroise that he would be unable to find a purchaser for his property, since the law was as severe against the purchaser as against the vendor.

"But," objected Ambroise, "if this law takes away from me the right to sell my property, it can not absolve me from paying my debts."

"No," replied the lawyer, "but you would have to furnish legal proof of your indebtedness."

"Ah, sir, my uncle has kept no accounts of my indebtedness to him, but they are written on my heart, and, if he has forgotten the benefits with which he has overloaded me, that is all the greater reason why I should remember them."

"That is proof of the goodness of your heart, but goodness of heart does not constitute a legal claim for permission to sell one's property. In this respect an honest Huguenot is less fortunate than a rascal who has the good luck to be a Catholic."

"At least, if I am not able to sell my property, I can

give it away; and, so far as I am concerned, that amounts to pretty much the same thing; for I imagine that with this little property it would be no very difficult thing to persuade M. Upokrites and his friends to dispense with the usual formalities."

"No, my dear Ambroise, the law stands in your way again, and it forbids a gift of real estate between persons; thus, you are able to buy as much as you like, but you can not sell, and I do not see any other way for you to sell your property than by getting the necessary permission."

Ambroise could not conceive it possible that there should be a law forbidding him to be grateful. "What!" said he; "I have some property; I wish to give it away to another because I do not care to keep it any longer, and I am not allowed by law to do it! This is strange indeed!"

The lawyer then explained to him that the object of this law was to prevent the newly converted from escaping out of the kingdom.

"So the king knows that we are in a miserable condition," said Ambroise, "since he is afraid of our running away; but would it not be a wiser thing for him to seek to retain by benefits rather than by fear? And what is more, sir, it is impossible to keep people here by force. When once we become convinced that our country is a hard and cruel mother who banishes us from her bosom, one quits her without a sigh, in order to flee to a kinder one who will be a benefactor instead of a persecutor. Liberty is priceless, and though it cost our whole fortune to purchase it, the price is not too great. I understand nothing about law, but it seems to me that no law can oblige a subject to remain in a country where he is not happy. If the king orders me to stay in a country, and nature, that abhors suffering, orders me to leave it, I may respect the king, but I shall certainly obey the dictates of nature."

"You are right," agreed the lawyer. "I might even observe that this law, that forbids Protestants to sell their property without permission, is open to many other objections. It frightens the subject, because it makes him feel that the state is but one vast prison for him, from which he can not escape, and in that way it destroys the consciousness of liberty, which is the mainspring of industry. It reminds us too forcibly of our chains, which the authorities would do well to conceal with flowers. It discourages the acquisition of real estate and destroys the confidence of the subject, who should be encouraged to engage in industry by the assurance that he is working for himself and for his children. It disturbs a large multitude of families who have to sell a part of their possessions in order to save the rest from being completely wrecked. I know but one way," continued the lawyer, "of selling your property; but it will take long and the costs will be heavy."

"Never mind the costs; never mind the costs," quickly cried Ambroise; "provided I have a thousand livres left with which to pay my uncle's fine and his expenses, I shall be satisfied."

He insisted so strongly that it was agreed between them to arrange it in the manner suggested by the lawyer. An indebtedness of three or four thousand livres on the part of Ambroise was assumed, a writ was issued against his property, at the cost of about three hundred livres, and the domain was sold off cheap, as the domain of a bankrupt, so that when Ambroise had paid his uncle's fine and the law costs, the procurators and the lawyers, there was nothing at all left for himself; but he had his uncle, and that was enough for him. Poor Jerome Borely was taken out of the prison, but, in addition to the maladies from which he was suffering when confined, he had there contracted a rheumatism which tormented him to the end of his days.

CHAPTER IX.

Ambroise went on his way home with bowed head and downcast eyes, and walked along as one in deep thought. He was rudely awakened from his reverie by the frightful howlings of a mob. He went in the direction of the noise, to see what might be the cause of the tumult. Soon he caught sight of a crowd of constables, soldiers, priests, magistrates, and, in the midst of them, the executioner, who was dragging through the mud a naked corpse covered with filth and wounds. The head of the corpse was disfigured beyond all recognition by the blows from sticks and stones which were constantly rained upon it. Ambroise had no need to ask what it was all about, or the meaning of the insults hurled against the Huguenots, and the oft-repeated cries: "Well done, well done: they should all be served like this; they ought all to be hanged or burned." He could well understand that it was one of his Huguenot brethren who, upon his death-bed, had refused to take the sacrament from a Romish priest. Excited by this spectacle, the populace threw mud and stones against the houses and the stores of the Huguenots, and chased those who were unfortunate enough to be found by them on the streets. One might have supposed that an insurrection had broken out in the town, or that it had been delivered over to pillage by a victorious foe. Ambroise started to escape, but he was speedily recognized and could not get away quickly enough to escape sundry blows. He lost his cap, his face was covered with mud, and his coat was torn to rags, when happily he found a passage with a door which he slammed

behind him, and thus escaped from his pursuers. The house where Ambroise had taken refuge faced the open square, and several persons had come there to witness the edifying spectacle. It was not without pain and fear that he heard the bursts of laughter and the jokes of the lookers-on. They pained him to his heart. In order to avoid hearing them, he went back down the passage-way and soon found himself in a very obscure place. A short distance from him two men were walking up and down the garden, engaged in a warm discussion. One was a Jesuit, robed in black, and the other was the master of the house. They were talking about the tumult going on in the street; Ambroise did not lose a word, and this is what he heard:

"You must admit," contended the master of the house, "that it is cruel to be obliged to change opinion and to pretend, during the whole of one's life, to believe what one does not indeed believe in the bottom of one's heart. I am not at all surprised that, in the last moments of life, when one has no longer anything to fear, when one is no longer controlled by worldly interests and by the pleasures of a life of ease, a dying man who has no longer any reason to prevaricate should make confession of his real faith. For the life of me, I can not blame him. In our religion, I would rather have but a small number of true believers and be sure of them than to gain two or three million hypocrites!"

"Good," replied the Jesuit, "but what does it matter what these people believe in the bottom of their hearts, provided only that the king is persuaded of their conversion and that they go to mass? You are right enough in supposing that they are unwilling converts, and no doubt the king himself has his suspicions of the shams, for it is undoubtedly true that the large majority of them are converted only by force or for worldly reasons; but anyway,

they are in the fold of the church; we have done our duty; now it is God's business to convince them."

"That is to say, reverend father, that all this violence, massacres and punishments have resulted in manufacturing a great number of hypocrites. That is a dear way of buying bad subjects, and I frankly avow to you that I prefer a good Protestant to a bad Catholic."

"If the fathers are hypocrites, sir, the children will be true believers."

"I very much doubt that, reverend father, for men are never so much attached to their opinions as when they find an attempt made to force them to abandon them. We naturally suspect that those who would force us to adopt their belief have no better arguments to support their creed. The very violence that they use to force their creed upon us becomes a proof of the superiority of our own belief. People become, therefore, the more attached to their religion by the very means adopted to force them to abandon it. And do you not suppose that, in the secrecy of the home, the parents will teach to their children the religion they themselves have never, in their hearts, forsaken? Take, for instance, this unfortunate fellow whose corpse is to-day dragged through the mud; he knew the fate that awaited him; he knew the shameful character of the proceedings, and yet the force of conviction prompted him to brave it all."

"Ah, well!" replied the black-robed Jesuit, "this example will be a warning to others, and, even though we may not be successful, we are sure that exploits like these from time to time will keep alive among the people a social hatred that will produce the happiest results. For instance, it is now more than a month that popular feeling had begun to subside, tranquility had become re-established and a spirit of toleration was becoming manifest; so we

begin by giving a new warning—we dig up from the grave the corpse of some unfortunate and expose it to the insults of the populace, or we hang a minister, or we send a dozen men to the galleys, and the people are reminded that there are heretics whom they must hate."

"Would it not be better, reverend father, to tolerate these heretics and teach the subjects of the king to love one another? For, after all—"

"No, no, sir," replied the man in black impatiently. "No, indeed, our forefathers never did that, and they were not barbarians; they were very enlightened and humane men. Francis I. gave us an example of the manner in which the tocsin should be sounded against heretics. If he had consulted a man like you, he would have tolerated these so-called reformers, and perhaps the oblivion in which he would have left this sect would have snuffed it out. But he went to work in a much wiser way. He gave orders for a large and brilliant procession; he himself marched at the head of it, accompanied by his son, bareheaded and in a very devout and humble manner; sacred hymns were sung, and with the sounds of these sacred harmonies very soon mingled the shrieks of a number of obstinate heretics who were burned alive. That, sir, is what I call a good and vigorous policy; for you can well understand that the example of such a prince made a prompt and deep impression on the minds of the Parisian populace, and gave it the taste for flaming stakes for a whole century."

The man in black assumed such a firm and haughty tone that the master of the house took the hint and said no more. It was too dangerous a thing in those fine days of the brilliant century in which Louis XIV. reigned to speak of humanity towards heretics; for this humanity was itself a punishable heresy. He therefore pretended to agree with the ideas of the Jesuit, and the rest of the conversation was

of a very peaceful character. They admired the great advantage of processions, each of which is, so to speak, a small army of the saints, assembling under the banner of the parish; an army whose zeal makes it capable of undertaking any enterprise. They agreed that it was neither indecent nor cruel to drag a naked and bleeding corpse through the streets. In this connection they cited from Homer the example of Achilles; they admired the impartial policy of the Jesuits, who forced Protestants to take the sacraments which they refused to the Jansenists; in an undertone they admitted that this society had never accomplished a greater and more diplomatic move than the expulsion of the Protestants from the country, as the Protestants were expert politicians; they observed with pride that now for more than a century no one had dared to raise his voice against a society so powerful, so wholly without moral scruple and so unrelenting in its acts of vengeance.

At this point Ambroise,hearing a noise, hastened towards the door of the passage where he had found refuge. He opened it cautiously and made his way back home. On his way he overheard several heated conversations at the street corners. A sound of voices seemed to pervade the entire town, like the moaning of the sea whose waves are gradually sinking to a calm after a storm. For a long time afterwards people talked about the events of that day; for work had been suspended as though for a public holiday. In favor of such exhibitions, which our gentler manners have ceased to appreciate, it was urged that they kept the minds of men in vigorous action; they gave a polish to manners and provided frequent holidays for the people, who, of course, ought not to keep at work all the time

In further illustration of the Romish practice of insulting the dead Huguenots by dragging their corpses through

the streets, the author cites the following well-authenticated cases:

In April, 1749, Daniel-Etienne de la Montagne, who had died at Catenet, in Provence, and had been buried in the country, was disinterred by a surgeon named Pascal Berault and others. They tied a cord around the neck of the corpse, and dragged it all through the village, to the sound of the drum and the flageolet. The howling multitude insulted the memory of the dead man and belabored the corpse with sticks; after which they hung up the corpse head downwards, cut open the body, tore out the heart and entrails, and carried them around in procession, and finished up by cutting the body in four quarters. These facts are attested by the official report of the judge; but no one was ever punished for the deed.

Claude Cabanis, a merchant of Alais, in the Cevennes, who had won universal esteem by the uprightness of his character, his talents and his charity, and had been a most useful citizen in the commune where he had established his business, died at Levaur the 14th of July, 1749, and was buried at night. In spite of the vigorous protests of the populace, he was disinterred at the instigation of the "White Penitents" and cut to pieces.

A Protestant minister, Louis Ranc, aged twenty-five years, having been executed at Die, in 1745, M. d'Audriffret, the sub-delegate of the Intendant, together with a grand-vicar, caused the dead body to be dragged through the streets, and compelled a young Protestant to assist the executioner in his odious task.

The Jesuit's reasoning about the Protestants who had abjured their religion to save their lives reminds the author of a passage in a speech of the Jesuit Bourdaloue, who, in an address about charity to the newly converted, said:

Do you not know, ladies, that there is an infinite number of poor people who are in a position of special peril? They are but half converted. I say half converted because, in spite of all external demonstration and the words that they have spoken, we must not suppose that everything necessary has been done, for, as a matter of fact, many have only yielded to force, and, whilst being Catholics outwardly, are hardly to be considered as Catholics at heart.

Massillon, in a sermon on "True Worship," says:

It is thine, O Saviour, to change the inner man, to bring back the hearts, to enlighten the minds of those who perhaps have submitted only to the arms of man; that there may be only one fold, one shepherd, one heart and one soul in thy church.

That is to say: "Lord, we have forced them to enter the church, we have carried death into the bosom of three hundred thousand families, we have leveled an irreparable blow at the state; there they are within the fold, now there is nothing to do but to convert them; that is thy work alone, we all acknowledge."

With regard to the refusal of the sacrament to the Jansenists, the author adds the following note:

The entire town of Melun can attest the following fact. Everybody remembers the scandalous scenes that were witnessed in France, and of which the Jesuits were the authors, in connection with the refusal of the sacraments. The bishop of the said town of Melun, Monsieur de V——, a slave to Jesuitical opinions, otherwise a very honest man, believing sincerely that it was not his duty to yield on this point to superior orders, never wished to permit the holy sacrament to be administered to Abbe R——, a Jansenist who was sick, and who desired the sacraments. The bishop, in order to have an excuse that to his mind should be satisfactory, and one that should relieve him of the necessity of formally refusing the sacrament, instructed his vicar, Abbe L——, to make his round in all the parishes and to use up all the consecrated wafers. Unfortunately, the *ciboires* were well supplied, and the vicar, with much effort, had to eat a large number of them; this caused an attack of indigestion so serious that his physician had great difficulty in curing him without an emetic.

CHAPTER X.

Ambroise made good progress in his knowledge of affairs. He had good business talents. Misfortune had developed his character and trained him to habitual thoughtfulness; thus, whilst young in years, he had a maturity of character that is usually the fruit only of long experience. His mother was worn with grief and the tears she had shed; poverty and sorrow had furrowed her features. Her long-continued anguish had brought on her a premature old age.

"My son," she would sometimes say, "I have no longer any reason to love this world: my sorrows have weaned my affections from it. What better use can I make of the little time that remains to me than to prepare for the end that is fast approaching? All the time I do not spend with you I pass in meditation, in reading, in rendering to God the homage which is his due, and in doing to my fellow-creatures the little good that is in my power."

Ambroise was very happy to have these pleasant talks with his mother, and he was never so happy as when he had in some way contributed to her pleasure and peace of mind.

One evening when he went home from business he was extremely surprised not to find his mother there: she had gone out, the neighbors said, at nightfall, promising to be back again soon. He waited for her with anxiety; this anxiety increased with every moment. An oppressive sadness made his heart ache and found vent in frequent sighs. Soon he became possessed with the awful presentiment of some frightful catastrophe. This was not a false presentiment, for, about midnight, his mother came in, walking

with great difficulty, and supported by one of her friends. Ambroise was about to speak some words of loving reproach; but imagine his alarm when he saw, as his mother, weeping, stretched out her arms to embrace him, that she was covered with blood. She fell fainting on his breast. He did everything in his power to restore her to consciousness, and at last had the happiness of seeing her open her eyes and come to herself. She then told him that she had been to the woods where a few persons had gathered for prayer; that they had been betrayed, and that soldiers had come upon them unexpectedly and had fired on them at short range. One-half of the assembly was composed of women and aged men, and had been massacred, and the rest had been taken prisoners. Ambroise's mother had been wounded by a shot beneath the ribs. Ambroise ran for help to a surgeon. Ah! what bitter tears he shed when he learned that the wound was mortal, and that his dear mother had but a few hours to live. But it seemed as though he were doomed to drink the dregs of bitterness in this hour as his mother was passing away; for the surgeon drew him on one side and said: "I shall be compelled, sir, to do my duty and inform the parish priest of the danger your mother is in, in order that he may come to her with spiritual help. I should be punished myself if I failed to hand in the notice."

Ambroise was terrified, and sought by tears and prayers to prevent the surgeon from giving in the fatal notice. But the surgeon replied that the declaration of the king was too explicit; that he should render himself liable to a fine of three hundred livres, and that he could not run the risk of having to pay such a fine simply to do Ambroise this favor. As he said this he went towards the staircase and descended in great haste.

Ambroise knew what a terrible thing the arrival of the

priest was to a dying person, for with the priest came the officers of justice. He foresaw them with their entreaties and their threats; he could imagine the drawing up of the charge of heresy with brutal inconsideration under the very eyes of the dying person. This charge he knew would be all the more grave because the surgeon whom he had imprudently called in would most certainly inform the priest how his mother had received the mortal wound. The dying woman's attachment to her religion was well known, and he greatly feared that after her death his dear mother might be dragged through the mud of the streets and her body finally thrown on the rubbish heap. In such a moment his filial piety gave him courage and a strength he could not have found under other circumstances. He wrapped his mother in a sheet and carried her off on his shoulders, in order to get her away from the persecutions which he foresaw. The weight of his burden was such that he could not go far. Finding himself in a narrow, crooked street opposite the door of one of his friends, he stopped there. His friend came down at the sound of the bell. With tears in his eyes, Ambroise begged an asylum for his dying mother; he was even preparing to take his precious burden in. But in those unhappy times each one looked after himself, and fear of one's own misfortunes made one insensible to those of others.

"My dear Ambroise," said his friend to him, "I can not do you the service you ask of me. I know the laws: they are severe and the officers of the law are greedy and pitiless. There is a decree of the king that forbids, under penalty of a fine of five hundred livres, the removal, under pretext of charity, of sick persons of the pretended reformed religion. This law is unjust, I know. It treads all humane considerations underfoot; I concede all that; but my fortune does not permit me to make such sacrifices,

and you ought, yourself, to perceive that already your staying so long at my door may prove my ruin."

This was a knock-down blow to poor Ambroise; he could hardly believe his ears. But his love for his mother gave him strength, and, taking his burden up again, he continued his journey. He groped his way through the darkness; yet, whilst doing this heroic act, he felt as guilty as though he had committed some great crime.

In a little, obscure street that led out of the town there was a deserted cottage. It was in this abandoned hovel that Ambroise took refuge. His mother was overcome with pain and fatigue. She was losing blood, and she herself knew that her end was near.

"No, dear mother," said the son, "I can not believe that Providence will snatch you from my arms in so cruel a manner. Heaven is just, and it surely will not permit me to lose you at a time when I so much need your help. Ah! live to be my consolation and my happiness. Allow me to send this man who has followed us to beg some surgeon to come and lend us his aid."

"No, no, my son, it would be useless. Let me die far from those horrible men. . . . Their help, my son—perhaps they would refuse to help. Have they not always some royal decree to serve as a pretext for their barbarity? And who knows but what, in order to refuse their help, they would plead the royal declaration calling on physicians to abandon a patient who, after a second visit, should refuse to give up his religion? You are losing precious moments, my dear son. Receive here my blessing. Remember your mother. Try to take your brothers and sisters to a country where you will have liberty to worship God. . . . Preserve my bones from persecution by burying me in some solitary place—"

The unfortunate woman's voice was failing. She beg-

ged her son to stay in silence by her, and, after having given about half an hour to prayer, she heaved her last sigh.

Ambroise was desolate indeed. He fondly kissed the remains of the best of mothers. His tears fell freely upon her. He spoke the most touching words to her, as though she had heard them. In the bewilderment of his mind he seemed to expect each moment that she would again open her eyes to the light. The man who had accompanied Ambroise was touched with the orphan's grief, and did all he could to assuage the young man's sorrow. He at length succeeded in dragging Ambroise away from the corpse, over which they stretched the sheet they had brought.

The day had dawned. The sun shone in the deserted cottage. Ambroise began to be afraid of the perilous position in which he found himself. Fear came in to divert his grief. He arranged with this man, in whom he could trust, to go to the town and procure some provisions for the day. Ambroise determined to watch beside his mother, and they arranged to go at night to a distant place to bury the dead. He was fortunate in not being discovered during the day. When the night came, aided by some relatives and friends, they furtively laid the remains of the good woman to rest. They had great difficulty in tearing Ambroise from his mother's grave, and it was only after he had exhausted himself by long-continued weeping that he at length said a last adieu.

Notes to Chapter X.

The edict revoking the Edict of Nantes forbade assemblies, and confiscated body and goods; the death penalty was not expressly decreed until the edict of July 1, 1686, by Article V. of that edict. An order of the 12th of March, 1689, confirms this penalty, and further decrees that those who may not have been taken in the act, yet who may have been known to attend Protestant assemblies, shall be sent to the galleys for life, by the military commanders or the intendants of the provinces, without any legal formalities or trial. What was the reason for this unheard-of severity, this violation of the rights of citizenship? No citizen

should be condemned to any penalty without a regular trial. The ordinances of Louis XIV. himself had recognized this right of the citizen.

Every one will admit that it was outrageous to condemn peaceable citizens to the galleys—gentlemen who had even bled for their country—yet condemned for no other reason than that they had assembled together, and, in their own French language, had prayed to God for the prosperity of the state and of the king. It was therefore a cruel injustice not only to allow these orders to remain in force, but to confirm them by another, dated the 14th of May, 1724, after sixty years of submission, untroubled by a single murmur, had proved that French Protestants are obedient subjects and faithful citizens.

These royal decrees have been the cause of the excesses committed by the troops. On the 17th of March, 1745, two companies of the regiment of La Rochefoucauld cavalry fired into a meeting in the diocese of Lavaur, where no resistance was made. One hundred and twenty-three infantry soldiers did the same on the 21st of the following November, near Saint-Hippolyte, in the Cevennes. On the 8th of September, 1748, in the neighborhood of St. Ambroix, in the diocese of Uzes, a detachment of soldiers insulted the women and girls, tore from them their rings, their silver ornaments and necklaces, took from them whatever money they had, and wounded several persons. Some dragoons committed similar outrages at another meeting, on the 9th of June, 1749, in Dauphiny, near to Montmeyran. On the 22d of November, 1750, several persons were wounded near to Uzes by 150 men of the regiment of the *Ile de France*. On this occasion the soldiers made three hundred prisoners who allowed themselves to be taken as peaceably as lambs, although the meeting was very large.

The decree compelling a medical attendant to give notice to the parish priest of the near approach of death to a Protestant, was issued through the Parliament of Toulouse, and dated the 22d of June, 1699.

The decree forbidding Protestants to give shelter to their suffering co-religionists was an *Arret du Conseil*, dated 4th of September, 1684. Thus the sufferers were condemned to breathe the pestiferous air of the hospitals, and it was made a crime to practice the virtues enjoined by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XI.

In ardent and vivacious souls sorrow finds vent in paroxysms of violent emotions, and the very violence itself is a relief. It is far otherwise with strong and sensitive souls. To them a sorrow is ever present; they commune with themselves alone, and in this self-communion the sorrow becomes more enduring and deeper. Nature had given to Ambroise this type of character; a long series of troubles had tended to strengthen his spirit and cultivated within him the habit of deep reflection. He was continually rehearsing to himself the sad experiences of his life, from the death of his father to the death of his mother; all the "Declarations" of the king which had borne so cruelly upon him and those dear to him, and which would probably continue to do so to the end of his days. He observed how all these royal declarations stirred up a popular hatred against those of his religion, and, in face of this fact and the constant punishments that were inflicted on them, he groaned inwardly. He had not forgotten his mother's dying request that he would try to deliver his brothers and sisters and convey them into a free country. He resolved to do his utmost to accomplish this task. He was constantly, in his imagination, taking flight into those happy lands where at last he hoped to find liberty of conscience and rest. He had seen hundreds of letters from refugees in which they expressed the joy they felt in finding themselves out of France. The joy of these unfortunate exiles was so intense that, immediately they were well over the frontier, they fell upon their knees and rendered thanks to Heaven; in transports

of happiness they kissed the soil of the land that gave them hospitality, and, looking back to their native land, they shed tears of sympathy for those who were still imprisoned there. These accounts from the exiles so excited the imagination of the French Protestants that they left the country by hundreds and by thousands. The plows were abandoned in the fields, cattle were abandoned, manufactures ceased, and at length the bands of fugitives were so large that neither guards nor constables nor armed peasants dared to arrest their march.

Ah! what evils came on France as a consequence of these forced desertions. They can never be fully estimated. Not only did our country lose her most useful subjects; not only were the gold, the silver and the arts of France carried into other lands, but soon manufactures and business generally dwindled all over the country. The reports of the provincial governors bear ample testimony to fearful losses that resulted from these events.

Ambroise made great efforts to induce his brothers and sisters to escape from the convents in which they were confined and to follow him into exile. He had great difficulty in getting any news at all of them. It would be too long a story to tell how at last he succeeded, and all he learned about the manner in which they were treated. He waited several months in order to give them time to make their escape; but, seeing at length that his waiting was in vain, he decided to take the road to the Swiss frontier and thence to make his way to Holland, where he had some relatives. He very readily found some traveling companions. It was just at that time that the declaration of the king had been republished ordering parents to have their children baptized within forty-eight hours. The "converters" were very zealous in carrying out this law, and the Protestants found this kind of persecution most insupportable. They said the

church regards as her own the children she baptizes. One day she will come and claim them and put them in convents. The Protestants would never promise to bring up their children in the Romish religion, but such a promise was required of every parent who permitted a child to be baptized by a Romish priest. The Protestants knew very well that this baptism was only a pretext for undermining the parents' authority over the child. They remembered the violent struggles that had been caused by this same measure some years previously, when it was said that some children had perished in their parents' arms in the violent endeavor of the priests to snatch the child away. The alarm everywhere became so terrible that entire families went off into exile. Whereas, previously to that time, only individuals, exasperated under a sense of personal wrong, passed over the frontier, now it was that fathers and mothers, wounded in their most tender affections, gathered together all that they could carry of their earthly goods, and, taking their children with them, sought to flee the country.

In order that his flight might be the more secret and sure, Ambroise joined a party of not more than a dozen persons, who made their way along the most obscure roads and marched only during the night, in order to avoid the guards and Catholics, for all Catholics, as well as the dragoons, seemed to think they had a perfect right to rob and murder their fellow-countrymen. "Good citizens," they said, "ought to be zealous in working for the good of the country."

To this chapter the editor appends the following extract from Benoit's "History of the Edict of Nantes," by way of illustrating the treatment accorded to Protestant children by the monks and nuns in the convents:

The records of those times have preserved to us accounts of the methods employed by the monks and nuns in their attempts to convert the children of Protestants. They made use of pretended

visions, sham miracles, curses that they said were pronounced against obstinate children, promises, threats, rewards, punishments, imprisonments, fasts, branding of infamous marks on the body: everything possible was done to reduce them to submission. Many children were reduced to a most pitiable condition by such treatment; several were driven out of their mind by persistent persecution. A young girl of Balleme, who was imprisoned at Alencon in a house established to receive little girls, drew upon herself, by her constancy, the hatred of the sisters who conducted the establishment. One day they thrashed her with rods until she was covered with blood, and by other bad treatment, made her an epileptic. . . . Children were imprisoned in dark, damp and dirty dungeons, and, as the sisters placed them there, they would tell them that demons would come to them. . . . They forced the children to attend the mass. Rods were the favorite instruments of torture employed by the nuns against these children, whom they treated with all the refinements of cruelty that seem to be a peculiar product of the religious communities. At Uzes these outrages were legalized. The sister superior of a House for the Newly Converted complained of the rebellion of some girls who did not seem to be sufficiently good Catholics. They were condemned to be whipped by the nuns, and the punishment was administered in the presence of the major of the regiment at Vivonne and of the judge of the town. There were eight girls punished, the youngest being sixteen and the oldest twenty-three, yet the punishment was administered to them as though they were little children. They were whipped in the presence of a number of their companions for the sake of serving as examples. During the punishment the young women reproached the nuns for their false piety, that thus outraged the modesty of their sex.

The royal declaration referred to in this chapter as obliging Protestant parents to have their children baptized by a Romish priest within forty-eight hours is dated Dec. 13, 1698: Article VIII.

CHAPTER XII.

On the whole, this is a pretty good century we are living in. We no longer place little children in the red-hot arms of a copper statue; we no longer imitate the torture known as the "Bull of Phalaris;" we no longer see seven or eight monarchs, followed by their subjects, with cross on breast or shoulder, invade the kingdom of another; there is probably not a living monarch who has the remotest intention of repeating the little blood-letting of St. Bartholomew's Day; I even believe that it is now more than thirty years since a witch or a heretic has been burned. I frankly admit that I much prefer a condition of social calm and peace, and, if it was a necessity that, in the history of humanity, there should be a period of massacres, of burnings, of imprisonments and other national tragedies, I very much prefer that they should be in the past than in the present. I observe, even with a great deal of pleasure, that our manners have a tendency to become gentler and to lean towards peace and mutual helpfulness: here and there charitable institutions are being founded; every useful idea is patronized by some prince. I confess that I am greatly pleased when I read an article that pleads for toleration, because, after all, it seems to me that monarchs are largely governed by public opinion: like the common people, they are but the heirs of the ideas they have received from others; all are creatures of environment.

I sometimes hear grumblers praising "the good old times." I always feel sorry for them that they had the misfortune to be born a hundred years too late. Ah! if

they had but come in the glorious days of French history, in the brilliant and destructive century of the Fenelons and the Bavilles, of the Racines and the Marillacs, of the La-Fontaines and of the d'Herapines, of the Corneilles and the Pere-la-Chaises, how their souls would have rejoiced at the interesting events that occurred in the provinces! Whilst Louis the Great, at Paris, was attending the comedies of Moliere or the harmonious dramas of Quinault, of whose prologues he was especially fond, the common people in the little towns witnessed real tragedies. One day it would be a gang of prisoners on their way to the galleys, marching on amidst the jeers and insults of the crowd. Another day it would be the public whipping by the common hangman of pious old Huguenots, or young boys, or some beautiful young girl. Another day it would be a picnic party to go and see half a dozen people hanged. And these sights were not rare. How often has the cry been raised, "*Panem et circenses*" (the people must have bread and public sports); but if we can only find amusements that harden and brutalize manners, is not that the very acme of political wisdom?

Such were the sights that in those days were witnessed in the French provinces, and which Ambroise beheld during his flight. He and his companions suffered great hardships in their journey. The governors had issued orders forbidding the supply of food to travelers not having chaplets—beads for counting the number of prayers offered to the Virgin Mary. But our fugitives found in the woods wild fruits and roots, by which they managed to keep up their strength. Everywhere they passed through desolated regions, farms absolutely deserted, and lands laid waste; or met Catholic laborers, victims of the misguided national zeal, begging their bread, or else wearing a cockade in order to have the privilege of taking it without the trouble of asking

for it. As they passed through villages they found the houses wide open, streets full of broken household effects, provisions destroyed or wasted—a perfect solitude. The country had all the appearance of having been overrun by a foreign invader. The highways were filled with soldiers, constables, prisoners, fugitives, beggars, robbers and bodies of murdered people. Such was the spectacle offered to Europe of that France that was supposed to aspire to universal monarchy.

But in those days foreign countries had a far different policy. The Edict of Nantes was revoked in the month of October, 1685. As soon as the Elector of Brandenburg received the news, the 29th of the same month he published an edict by which he invited the oppressed who had been driven from their own country to come to his. As allurements to draw them into his country, he offered them considerable privileges, pensions, homes ready for them, especially churches where they might worship God. He distributed them in colonies over his estates, and there they found ministers to preach to them and judges to judge them in their own language. Several princes of Germany; the princes of Lunebourg, the landgraves of Hesse-Cassel and Hesse-Hombourg, the margrave of Bayreuth, imitated this example. French villages were transported entire into the forests of Germany, there to keep the name that was dear to them and where they continued to speak in their own sweet mother tongue.

England collected large sums of money for the entertainment of refugees, and sent a great number of them to the Indies with considerable advantage to herself as well as to the fugitives. Holland did twenty times more for them; she lavished on them pensions and gave help to the fugitive soldiers, to the nobles and ministers. Entire regiments were formed of refugees. The very sight of these thousands of

refugees scattered in the North, their tears, their regrets and their curses even, contributed to embitter other nations against France and to give to the allies, in the subsequent wars, that stubbornness that brought France to the very verge of ruin. The ambassadors of His Most Christian Majesty all wrote to the court reporting these things, but the heart of Louis was consoled by the sight of the statues that the church raised to his honor and the glory that he found in banishing heresy from his realm.

Ambroise and his companions, as they wandered through the woods, came across several fugitive Protestants under various disguises. Some of these joined their company, which was thus getting bigger and bigger. They journeyed long by obscure country roads and through a rough mountainous country, and at length arrived a few leagues south of the city of Lyons at a point where their guides told them it would be necessary to cross the river Rhone. They had the good fortune to find a man with a boat whom they paid to transport them to the other side. But it was an unfortunate day for them. Their movements had been watched from a neighboring village, and soon they heard the tocsin give the alarm and presently a score of armed peasants rushed down upon them. These good men were actuated by two powerful motives: their zeal for religion and the prospect of plunder. By the king's decree, one-third of the plunder taken from the fugitives would belong to those who had been able to arrest them; these wise and gentle laws had the effect of constantly keeping one class of Frenchmen in arms against another. Another third would belong, by the same decree, to the informers, a respectable class of men that, of course, every well-governed state must employ. So that, if any one should be so ill advised as to help these poor fugitives to escape pursuit or to help them in their escape, the least in the world, another law, not less sagacious,

passed the 7th of May, 1686, condemned these officious persons to the galleys. There were so many persons whose kindness of heart led them to forget this law, that, in the year of grace 1687, this penalty of the galleys was considered to be too lenient, and by the legislature was commuted to a death penalty. By these holy decrees everybody was excited and aroused, so that the very peasants were animated by a zeal for the upholding of the law and everywhere kept a sharp lookout for fugitives.

Ambroise and his companions resolved to defend themselves, and, pretending to arrange themselves in order of battle, they marched boldly to meet the peasants, who immediately took fright and fled, leaving the Protestants free to continue their march. But their trouble was only postponed; they were watched, followed, and two days after were arrested in Dauphiny with their guides. Ambroise, who well knew the king's decrees and the penalty that he had incurred by simply attempting to leave the country, looked upon himself as now doomed to spend the rest of his days as a prisoner in the galleys. He resigned himself to his fate as a man who had no hope of being able to avoid it.

The day following, they were conducted to the point on the road where they were to join the chain-gang. They were chained by the neck to thieves; the chains weighed from forty to fifty pounds. The food given to them was of the coarsest kind and but little in quantity; and if they fell from weakness, they were beaten with sticks. When they reached the rendezvous of the prisoners, they saw a crowd of respectable people—merchants, lawyers, gentlemen—who had been arrested like themselves; several of these were deserving of respect on account of their age, their infirmities and their long service to society. Thus they arrived at Valence.

However, word was sent from Marseilles that the galleys

and prisons were full, that they had also filled with prisoners all the strong buildings in the neighborhood, and that they would not be able to receive any more. It was first of all decided, in the meantime, to put these pri-oners in dungeons, and as it was proposed to place them in the most horrible dungeons that could be found, several prisons were suggested which were renowned for dungeons notoriously infected and filthy. At Bourgoin, it was said, the dungeons are so deep, so narrow and so damp that they let the prisoners down into them by ropes under their armpits, and that the strongest, after being in one for two hours, would faint away. The dungeons at Grenoble had also their distinction; for they are so cold and damp that, at the end of a few weeks, the prisoners lose their hair and teeth. Then, again, there was the dungeon of Flocelliere, through which passed the sewerage from the neighboring convent, and whither the people of the place took the trouble to take carrion in order to intensify the stench. Added to all this, the dragoons had a precious invention of their own. They would throw sheeps' entrails into the dungeons by way of adding to the odors. This playful diversion they called "throwing bombs."

If any of the readers of this history have specially strong nerves, and are endowed with a certain coarseness of soul, they may be able to note with pleasure that, in this fine century of Louis XIV., the minds of men had a peculiar energy, and that they had not been softened by reading Montesquieu, and the Marquis of Beccaria's work on "Crimes and Punishments." Such will doubtless shudder to think that the Government could be so ill advised as to suppress laws that, if they were allowed to remain upon the statute books, would at least perpetuate the same hardy spirit, the disappearance of which in these degenerate days is doubtless to them a matter of deep regret.

Ambroise was at first thrown, with two of his companions, into a very narrow dungeon where they could not possibly sleep all through the night, because their chains were left upon them. They could hear dismal cries as of women groaning frightfully, but after awhile the groans were exchanged for singing of psalms: soon voices joined in the hymns from all parts of the prison. Our three prisoners were greatly moved to hear this concert of praise rising from prison dungeons, and began themselves to join in; thus for an hour or so this horrible place resounded with the songs of praise of those who were shut up there. But these songs were succeeded by piercing shrieks, which came from a dungeon which was located above the one in which Ambroise and his companions were. Some one was brutally cowhiding two women. This horrible ordeal lasted nearly half an hour; at length the door was slammed to, and Ambroise could hear nothing but groans and sobs. Our prisoners were impatient to know who these women were whose situation seemed to be even worse than their own; they succeeded in pulling out a few bricks and thus establishing a verbal communication with the women, from whom they learned who they were and whither they were going. The women, on their part, gained similar information from Ambroise and his companions. It was on account of religion that they had all to endure this horrible treatment. They were the daughters of M. Ducros, a lawyer of Languedoc; they had refused to give up their religion, and for that reason had been sent to the general hospital of Valence, in accordance with a royal decree dated Sept. 3, 1685, which ordains that women who refuse to be converted shall receive discipline in convents. By an interpretation that was even worse than the law itself, these young women had been placed in the hands of the director of this hospital, a man named Herapine. This rascal did not allow a day to

pass without hanging these girls up by the hands, perfectly naked, and beating them with switches and rods. They had hardly anything to cover themselves with, and the only clothing supplied to them was underwear, foul with blood and pus, that had been worn by the patients in the hospital. They had to lie upon the ground in an infected dungeon, and the food given to them was more apt to poison than to nourish them. There were four daughters of a merchant of Languedoc also imprisoned here and subjected to the same tortures. A few days previously M. Menuret, lawyer of Montelimar, who had been arrested for attempting to leave the kingdom, had died there whilst being beaten with a stick. It would take days to tell the story of the frightful treatment the prisoners had to undergo. They encouraged each other. They recalled to mind consolatory passages of Scripture until the break of day. After awhile the dungeon doors were opened; the prisoners were aroused with the blows of sticks which, they were given to understand, were as much by way of punishment for singing psalms in the night as to make them hurry; but our prisoners, far from murmuring at this treatment, prayed for their tormentors, who, nevertheless, continued the spiteful treatment.

The following historical note is added by the editor of the edition from which this translation is made:

As some curious readers might be disposed to search amongst the parliamentary reports for this royal declaration of Sept. 3, 1685, I may as well forewarn them that they will not find it. There are several royal decrees that were judged by various parliaments to be so hard that they refused to register them. From this fact it would appear that the decrees they did register were, in their opinion, just and merciful, since they not only registered them, but also caused them to be rigorously enacted. However that may be, the following has been preserved in the records of those times:

"Louis, by the grace of God king of France and Navarre, to all to whom these presents may come, greeting. The governors of our provinces having brought to our knowledge the docility with which many of our subjects, who unfortunately had inherited the heresies of Calvin, are returning daily into the bosom of the

Church of Rome, our mother, being constrained thereto by the living light that our bishops and missionaries are spreading abroad on every side, as well as by that filial inclination which they rightfully have to submit to the paternal measures that we have so long adopted to bring them back again to the way of salvation; we have judged it to be proper to our royal piety and duty to forget nothing in the accomplishing of the work of the Lord.

"Furthermore, we have been informed that nothing has been so antagonistic to the holy resolution with which God has inspired us to purge our kingdom entirely of heresy, as the stubbornness of women, who not only refuse the instructions that Catholics so charitably offer them day by day, but also carry dissension into their homes by disputing with their husbands and relatives who manifest an inclination to embrace our holy religion. With a desire of putting an end to such scandals and criminal disobedience to husbands and relatives, we order that all women and girls who, within eight days of the publication of this decree, shall not have abjured the heresy of Calvin, shall be shut up in convents to be instructed for one month, after which, if they still display a stubborn spirit, they shall be constrained to fast, to watch, to pray, to receive discipline with the others in the convents where they may be until their conversion is entirely accomplished. We further command husbands and relatives to denounce their wives, daughters and relatives who shall be found liable to our present decree, under penalty of punishment in accordance with the instructions that we have given to our governors, whom we expressly forbid to use any leniency towards transgressors. We further command to punish, if necessary, with fines and bodily pains, those who would even ask for a relaxation of the severity of our laws in favor of any one, whoever it may be, without exception.

"Given at Versailles the 3rd September, 1685, the forty-third year of our reign.

"(Signed) LOUIS (and lower) PHILEPEAUX."

As an illustration of the benefits resulting to other countries by the intolerance of France, the editor mentions the colony of Frederichsdorf, in Hesse-Hombourg, which is entirely composed of French refugees, who, by their commerce, their manufactures and their manners, are in a perfectly well-to-do condition, and show themselves worthy of the protection of the sovereign whom it is their happiness to uphold.

As illustrating the respectable character of the prisoners who were subjected to the humiliating torture of marching across country to the galleys in the chain-gang, the editor says:

I could produce lists of three thousand persons arrested in the provinces since 1744 at their religious meetings. These arrests were made principally in upper and lower Languedoc, the Cevennes, Vivarais, Dauphiny, Provence, the Comte de Foix, Poitou and

Saintonge. Not to mention the common people, one may count more than six hundred private gentlemen, lawyers, physicians, good citizens and rich merchants who endured all that is most onerous of a hard and long captivity, which could be ended only by the payment of fines and contributions that were as ruinous as they were arbitrary. More than a thousand others have been condemned to infamous penalties. In this number there are about a hundred gentlemen of wealth. The parliament of Grenoble alone summoned three hundred persons in 1744, subjecting them to heavy traveling expenses and legal costs. In the month of July, 1746, the same court deputized Sieur Cotte with his marshals and an escort of two hundred soldiers. Wherever they went they subjected people to the worst sufferings on no other evidence than the simple denunciation of the priests. Later on similar visitations were made in Dauphiny, when more than three hundred persons were condemned to death, to the galleys, to be whipped, to the pillory, to banishment, to prison for life or for various periods, to degradation from the nobility or to expenses or pecuniary fines. Fifty-three gentlemen—among them were the Sieurs Bournat, Berger, Bayles, Saint Dizier, Bonnet, Chatillon, Oste, Trescou, Chateau-Double and Saint-Julien—were degraded and six were sent to the galleys.

In 1745, 1746, 1747, 1750 and 1751, more than three hundred persons, amongst whom were forty gentlemen and two chevaliers de Saint-Louis, were condemned to the galleys for life by the parliament of Bordeaux and by the governors of Auch, Montpellier, Perpignan, Poitiers, Montauban and La Rochelle. Couserans alone furnishes fifty-four examples. Five were even condemned to death in 1746 and 1747. These sentences were pronounced by the governor of Montauban, and the parliaments of Bordeaux and Grenoble.

CHAPTER XIII.

The chain-gang moved slowly on its way towards Marseilles. The number of prisoners increased daily beyond all expectation. The guards were at a loss to know what to do with them. The only parties who were pleased with this state of things were those who had the contract for feeding the prisoners; for as the food they provided was small in quantity and bad in quality, they doubtless made considerable profits.

Several days went by during which the prisoners were hourly expecting to be put aboard the galleys in fulfillment of their sentences. But it was announced to them that, as a mark of special favor, they were to be transported to the New World. Far from rejoicing at this news, they shuddered when they heard it: because they had heard that exiles transported to the New World were treated like African slaves. But all their sighs and groans were useless; they had to do with men who listened to neither reason nor mercy. The embarkment was hurried forward. The contractors who had undertaken the transportation to the New World saw with alarm that some of the prisoners were dying every day, and, fearing to lose the money they had already expended, also the bonus that was paid on the embarkation of each prisoner, they insisted so vehemently, and used bribes so judiciously, that soon everything was ready for the departure. The exiles burst into tears when they saw the ships; they prostrated themselves on the shore; they fervently kissed the soil that was rejecting them, the land where each one was leaving some one dear to him.

They now feared, as much as they had previously desired, to leave the country. The officers amused themselves at watching the desperate grief of the prisoners, and had the bad taste even to mock their gesticulations. At length they compelled the prisoners to embark; the coast of France gradually sank in the horizon and finally disappeared from view.

After sailing for a few days, the captain began to put into execution a plan that hitherto he had been very careful to conceal. It was to sink the ship. It was a rotten old hulk that had been selected for this voyage, and was already leaking in many places. The sailors placed in a skiff everything that was of any value from the ship, and then the captain boarded the skiff with his crew. Two sailors only were left aboard the ship to execute the final orders, which they did with the utmost secrecy. They pulled out a plug that bunged a hole in the bottom of the ship, and then, throwing themselves into the sea, swam out to the skiff. Some of the prisoners, and among their number was Ambroise, seeing their danger, broke their chains and ran to the pumps. For a time they worked frantically, but without avail. The water gradually gained in the hold of the ship, and at length, with a frightful plunge, she sank in the depth of the waters.

As an instance of how ignoble noblemen can be, E. Benoit, in his "History of the Edict of Nantes," tells the following:

The Count of Tesse had arrested some unfortunates, amongst whom was a person of quality who threw himself at the count's feet and begged for mercy. His words were broken with sobs and tears. The count, by way of mockery of the grief of the miserable man, kneeled down, joined his hands as in supplication, rolled his eyes, distorted his mouth and howled in mimic lamentations.

CHAPTER XIV.

Upon this ship was a man from La Rochelle who, after a variety of adventures, had found himself in Languedoc, where he had entered into the service of a Protestant gentleman, for which crime he had been condemned to the galleys. This man was an excellent seaman, and, seeing that the vessel was about to sink, he seized an ax and cut down the mizzen-mast. He also managed to rip up some of the boards of the deck. In this task Ambroise helped him. They then threw themselves into the sea before the ship made her final plunge. By means of these timbers three of the unfortunates managed to keep themselves afloat. The man from Rochelle taught them how best to husband their strength, and, as the wind blew from the east, they hoped before long to sight the coast of Spain. For twelve hours they were in the water without being able to perceive that they were making much headway; in the meantime, their strength was becoming exhausted, and they were about to perish from fatigue and hunger, when, to their great joy, a ship hove in sight. By shouting all together they managed to attract the attention of the crew of the passing ship. A boat was put off to rescue them. Who can describe their delight when they heard their rescuers speak in a language unknown to them? Each one thanked God that they had not fallen into the hands of their own countrymen. "At least," said Ambroise, "we shall not have to fear any royal proclamations." For at that moment he recalled with bitterness the long series of royal proclamations since 1685, from the time he lost his father until that moment when he found

himself a castaway in the waters of the Mediterranean Sea, half dead and about to be in the power of men whose nationality was unknown to him and whose language he did not understand.

But the language of kindness is universally understood. The strangers showed for the three Frenchmen the greatest possible kindness. Friendship seemed to beam from their faces, and they betrayed so much sympathy that the castaways soon realized they were in the midst of friends and that their misfortunes would soon come to an end. Once aboard the ship, they were put to bed and gently fed with light but nourishing food. Seeing both soldiers and sailors around them, the poor exiles could scarcely believe that these men, instead of torturing them, were really caring for them and helping them.

Their rescuers were Englishmen, cruising, in a ship of war, around Gibraltar, which at that date had not yet fallen into their hands. The chaplain of the ship understood a little French, and managed to hold some conversation with the rescued men, who told him of their misfortunes. They had the sympathy, not only of the chaplain, but of the entire crew. The Englishmen very freely expressed their horror and indignation at the treatment these men had received from their Government and fellow-countrymen. Having fulfilled her commission, the vessel sailed for London, where each of the Frenchmen soon found a position and congenial employment. It is unnecessary here to give in details Ambroise's experiences in England. He soon learned the language, and the business habits he had already formed helped him to advance, until after a few years he was able to engage in business on his own account and acquired a considerable fortune.

It might seem incredible that the simple act of being a servant in a Protestant family should be a crime, but such it was decreed

by a royal decree dated Jan. 11, 1686. This declaration recites that by the former decree of July 9, 1685, his Catholic subjects were forbidden to engage in their service persons of the so-called reformed religion, as tending to hinder the conversion of Protestants. He now declares it dangerous to allow to the newly converted the liberty of employing in their service persons of the said religion, and consequently no one of the so-called reformed religion shall under any pretext whatever hold the position of servant in the family of one of the same religion; under penalty of one thousand livres for the employer, the galleys for the men-servants, and the whip for the women-servants.

CHAPTER XV.

What, after all, is that attachment for our native land to which we give the imposing name of love of country? If we recall fondly the memory of places where we played in early years, is it not because we are not thoroughly satisfied with the present, and is it not for the same reason that we are constantly indulging hopes and making plans for the future? Should we take such pleasure in recalling the pastimes, for the matter of that, often dull enough, of our native village or little town, the houses, the fields, the woods in which we wandered in childhood's days, if we were altogether satisfied with our present condition?

Dissatisfaction with the present, it is said, is a sentiment peculiarly prevalent in the atmosphere of London. At any rate, Ambroise fell a victim to it; he became homesick and suffered from spells of depression. At such times his thoughts turned fondly to the scenes of his childhood, the little town where he was born, the hills around it, the huge boulders of rock in the torrent that rushed close by the city walls, the meadows through which he wandered as a boy. The desire once more to visit his native land became irresistible, in spite of the dissuasions of his friends among the multitude of refugees in London. He argued thus with his friends: he would tell them that since he left France the lot of his brothers had been greatly improved, that now the torch of reason was flaming, that now a philosophical spirit had supplanted the old persecuting spirit and a ray of wisdom was enlightening the country, the French nation was learning wisdom, that books and newspapers were preach-

ing tolerance and humanity, and that by all signs French society was becoming more tolerant and humane.

Possessed with these ideas, Ambroise embarked at Dover, full of impatience to see his beloved native land once more. It is easy to understand that he was not recognized by anybody in his little native town. His dress alone was a sufficient disguise. In those days it was the fashion in France to wear long-tail coats and high hats, and the English, in order to spite us, had taken to short-tail coats and low hats; which we adopted the next year, in consequence of which they discontinued the fashion for themselves. Ambroise's outfit bespoke the man of ample means without pretence of grandeur. He conveyed the impression of a man who was traveling for pleasure, without troubling himself about the opinions of others.

CHAPTER XVI.

Ambroise, born into the Protestant religion, brought up by a mother who had sacrificed everything for conscience' sake, confirmed in his opinions by the very means that had been taken to induce him to abandon them, was what might be called a religious man. Hardly had he given himself time to rest after his long journey, than he expressed a desire to attend a public religious service of his brethren in the faith. He was led out into the country, into a desert place of heather and reeds; a few green oaks scattered here and there afforded a little shade, but as it was summer-time and the weather extremely hot, as it often is in the south of France, the shade afforded by the few trees was far from sufficient to shelter the entire assembly. About four thousand people had assembled in this burning desert; they joined in public prayers, they sang the praises of the God of cities and deserts, and having listened to a discourse which had for its object an endeavor to encourage to a virtuous life, each one returned home, wet with perspiration, but happy in the consciousness of having rendered to God the homage that they believed to be his due.

A number of persons withdrew to a house some distance from the place of assembly to take a meal. Ambroise was invited to join them. There were two strangers in the company whom curiosity alone had drawn to the meeting. One of these was a careful observer of men and manners, and seemed to be more interested in observing the customs of men than the monuments of antiquity. He said that it was especially in large gatherings of people that the manners

and prevailing ideas of people could be learned. He held that laws should be framed according to the opinions of the majority of the people, and that the object of legislation should be to reform prevailing customs when they were vicious, to tolerate them when they were harmless, or to encourage them when they contributed to the moral good and prosperity of the community. It was his opinion that observers should note with the greatest care the general spirit of a people, which exhibits greater varieties than either climate or habits.

His younger companion, who had taken a more superficial view of men and things, had not made a careful comparison between the opinions peculiar to certain people and the primitive ideas to be found in all nations. His remarks betrayed the frivolity of his mind. He made fun of the monotonous music he had heard, and was especially critical of the absurd rhymes and meters of the Protestant psalmody.

One of the men in the company said: "We will admit, sir, that the verses are old-fashioned and the music is drawling, but that is the result of the tyranny of custom. When our forefathers adopted the translation of Marot, they found it in vogue at the court. Marot was one of the first poets of his day, and at that time there was no better to choose from. If we continue to make use of his psalms, it is because of the great difficulty of changing an established custom, and because very few persons have the courage to attempt the difficult task. As for the music, it is Goudimel's, who fell in the massacre of St. Bartholomew. It is fine and noble music. The celebrated Jean Jacques, speaking of it, says, 'The strong and manly melodies of Goudimel,' but I agree with you that we sing it badly. The music is difficult and our circumstances are such that we have not had the opportunity to learn music, but hope some day

that we may be able to do better, as we certainly shall if we can but have peace. You surely can not expect us to decorate the temple whilst it is in ruins."

"But yet, sir," replied the young man, "why any music at all, why any preaching, why any psalms? Why are you not satisfied to worship God at home according to your own ideas, without exposing yourself to this frightful heat which has been scorching my brain? As for me, I think that all worship is acceptable to God. I don't believe he has ever commanded you to annoy him with bad music."

"You think thus," replied the same man, "and I think otherwise. Act according to your opinion, but leave me to act according to mine. I may be mistaken, it is true, but so may you be mistaken also. If you believe that God has never told you to do anything, well, that is your business; but as for me, I believe that God requires me to worship him in the manner in which I do. I should be violating my own conscience if I did otherwise. I believe, as you do, that God does not command me to sing his praises in bad poetry; but I believe that in his sight verses good or bad are equally acceptable if they are the sincere tribute of our hearts, since I do not imagine that he has organs of sense like ours. I also believe that, since he is the God of all nations and of all languages, to him it is altogether a matter of indifference what language I use in worshiping him, whether Latin or French; but I believe it to be most reasonable and profitable for us to worship God in a language that we can understand. Thus, sir, until I am convinced that it is no part of my duty to worship God in public, it is absolutely necessary for me to worship God in a manner that I believe is acceptable to him."

The elder traveler then broke in upon the conversation and said to his companion: "My friend, I have traveled over many countries; I have seen various parts of Asia and

Africa; I have penetrated far into the interior of tropical Africa, and wherever I have found a community with any sort of regular organization to guarantee public order, I have also found some kind of religious worship. Wherever you find a police you find a religion, and you can trace the origin of these two institutions to the same epoch. And this has led me to suspect that the light of religion has been given to man to teach him justice or righteousness, and human society itself is designed to teach us the benefits of the reign of law, and as I can not possibly doubt that the social instincts of men are natural and innate, I suspect that it may also be an instinct that has led mankind in all countries and in all ages to invoke and worship a superior power."

"That is to say, sir, that you still believe in innate ideas, notwithstanding that Locke has clearly proved that—"

"I did not say that we have innate ideas, but I am quite prepared to believe that we have innate sentiments."

"And what is the difference between innate ideas and innate sentiments?"

"A very perceptible difference. Ideas are the results of sensations that the organs of sense transmit to the brain; thus it is clear that the brain can have no idea until something shall have been transmitted along the organs of sense. But our sentiments are our natural dispositions that we follow mechanically. Thus maternal love is an innate sentiment. A mother's love for her children is the result of neither reflection nor experience. And since I call instinct their blind following of conclusions of which they ignore the premises, and since all do the same without knowing the reason why, I believe that we ought to give the same name to such of our sentiments as all men follow from their birth, without being specially instructed to do so. It seems evident to me, for instance, that man is disposed,

like the ant, the beaver or the bee, to live in societies, and, just as the bee is not what she ought to be if she lives alone and apart from other bees, so man, living alone, would be weak, ignorant, imperfect and not in a condition to arrive at perfection. What has Nature done for us? A simple little thing. She has placed upon us a law which impels us to seek the society of our fellow-creatures, and from this simple fact behold laws, good and bad, courts, states and empires."

"What are you trying to prove?"

"This: when I see men everywhere agree in rendering worship, good or bad, to a superior power, I suspect that they are impelled so to do by a law of which they are unconscious, and I can not but feel that, if the Creator has made use of this means, it is better and more direct than if he had left us to arrive at this conclusion by the slower process of experience and the vagaries of human reasonings. However, I may possibly be mistaken—as I have often been. I have unfortunately several times treated with contempt and disregard opinions which I have ultimately adopted, so that now, when I oppose the opinions of others, I desire to do so with that respect which is due to men who may be better able to judge the matter than I."

"You believe, then, that the Creator has inspired us to recite certain forms of prayer, to bend the knees, to turn towards the east, to wear vestments of fine white linen and to sing vespers and matins?"

"No, I spoke simply of the sentiment which the Creator may have implanted in the heart of man, and not of the accessories that man has added. God simply says to all, 'Worship me in spirit and in truth.' Men's imagination and love of display have done the rest. If there is a God, and if he can be known by us, we can not but admire him. To admire him is to adore, to worship him. But whether we

worship him in a white surplice or in a black robe, whether we sing his praises in unison or in four parts, is a matter for each one to settle according to his own conscience, and if I were a king I would not wish to persecute anybody for singing in any particular fashion."

"It seems, then, according to your reasoning, that you think that in reality the exterior form of worship is a matter of but little consequence. In that case, where is the harm of the king compelling others to adopt the form of worship that he prefers?"

"Where is the harm? There is the greatest possible harm. In the first place, he can not do it. The attempt to do it has already cost the country five civil wars and three million lives. That is a rather costly experiment. You can see by the zeal of these gentlemen how tenaciously they hold to their opinions. Even supposing their religion to be false, they believe it to be true; which for them is exactly the same thing. I doubt not that they will continue to feel that they are under obligation to follow the religion they believe in until they can find a better. I wish with all my heart that the ideas of men might become more and more noble and perfect; for that end I would be ready to shed the last drop of my blood; but I would not shed one drop of their blood to force them to change their opinions."

At hearing these noble sentiments from the stranger, a murmur of applause went around the company. These hearts, cowed and humiliated by long and bitter sufferings, seemed to brighten up under words of sympathy, like flowers which, beaten down by a storm, begin to raise their heads when the sun shines out again.

"Ah! gentlemen," said one of the company, "you say well, we may be deceived; it seems to us that the simple worship that we render to God is that which seems most natural. We reject other forms only because they seem to

us to be unnatural and unreasonable and that neither God nor nature sanctions them. At any rate, our sincerity is beyond suspicion; the very perils to which we expose ourselves are a proof of our good faith. But if it is a matter of no consequence what kind of worship we render unto God, as this gentleman seems to think, it surely is not worth while that others should fly at our throats because we have a different opinion."

Sympathy for the sufferings of others is a sentiment to be found deep down in almost every heart; personal interest and prejudice may often stifle it, but there come moments when it will develop, when it will burst forth with greater force for having been repressed. This was the case with the younger traveler. He had at first regarded the Protestants with that contempt that we too often feel towards the downtrodden, before we take the trouble to enquire whether they are right or wrong. The remarks of his companion had been for him like a shaft of light. "You are right," said he. "If worship is an eternal law dictated by the Supreme Being, these people, without knowing it, are following a law hidden deeply in their nature; if they have added some indifferent practices, it can not be a crime; at least, they are no more guilty than other people who do similar things. Their worship is the most simple in existence, since they have added less than others to the universal instinct." These new-born convictions were clearly depicted upon the frank and open countenance of the young man.

"Do not suppose, gentlemen," said he to the company, "that I intended any insult in ridiculing the opinions that have drawn down upon you so much suffering. The unfortunate, whoever they may be, always have a claim upon my respect, and I know only too well that, in order to be persecuted, it is often only necessary to be right. I believe I might even go so far as to say that of two parties, one of

which persecutes the other, it is the persecutor who is in the wrong. But will you allow me, as a friend of the unfortunate, to make some observations? If you have felt the force of my friend's remarks, you will doubtless have felt that the essential thing in worship is the homage paid to God, and the non-essential or indifferent part is the external form of that worship. Why, then, do you not limit yourselves to heart worship, or, at most, to domestic worship, which is not now forbidden? You would thus render to God the homage you owe to him, and you would not expose yourselves to the persecutions of men."

"Ah, sir," then remarked the master of the house, "don't you suppose that we would do that if we held your opinions? But we have not your opinions. We believe that God wishes us to worship him in the manner we do, and we could not observe any other kind of worship. We are under obligation, as your friend has admitted, to obey our own conscience, because we believe we are in the right."

"My dear friend," then said the elder of the travelers, "do not push my principles further than I am prepared to follow them; and especially do not draw conclusions from them that are not warranted by the premises. Observe, it is not domestic worship that we see established all over the earth, but public worship. All people have had temples or religious rendezvous in which worship has taken a certain form. The evil with these people is not that their worship has taken a certain form, but that they have hated those who, without knowing or consulting them, have adopted another. I should regard it a very great misfortune for humanity if all the temples were closed, and the opinion prevailed that it was sufficient to worship God in private."

"You surprise me. Why, should we not then at length see upon this earth re-established that peace that theologians have disturbed? There would be no more religious quarrels,

no more holy wars in which men robed in white fight against men robed in black, no more consecrated banners under which to rally the persecutors, no more pretexts to be persecuted, and, as a consequence, no more of those evils that have devastated Europe for centuries."

"It is true we should not have these evils, but we should have others, for such is the natural weakness of humanity that there are drawbacks to all its institutions and to all its various modes of life. If there were no more public speaking to men on religious themes, if they were never reminded of the punishments to come to evil-doers and of the rewards of well-doing, it is evident that soon there would be no religion, and you see that brings us to the great question whether, after all, religion is not the great misfortune of mankind, which I am very far from admitting. This is a discussion that befits an assembly of philosophers, but what we have to do with now refers to these good, simple people whom we have come into the desert to observe. The question is, ought the privilege of public worship to be taken away from these Protestants, or, in other words, ought their religion to be taken away, for that is the same thing? Is it wise to establish a people without a religion in the midst of a kingdom where a religion already exists? Is it prudent, or even possible, to deprive this people of a religion which they have once known or followed?—whether such an end could be brought about by any arguments or by any laws—and what would be the consequences to the state of this sudden and ill-contrived privation?"

"Sir," said to him one of the company, "the experiment has already been tried here in this very country where you are at the present moment. The people who lived here found themselves deprived of their opportunities for worship when their ministers had been driven away. The people were so much opposed to the dominant religion that

unnumbered acts of violence had not availed to induce them to embrace it. They found themselves without instruction, without religious assemblies, and without public prayers. Well, what happened? Cherishing constantly fond memories of their temples, that were become more dear to them by privation, they met in secret; any one who could or would performed the office of minister, and women and even children took part in the services. These ignorant ministrants supplied the deficiency of their knowledge by the most absurd vagaries; soon there appeared prophets and prophetesses; the people, hungering for spiritual food of some kind, no matter what, began to have visions and yielded themselves up to the most ridiculous fanaticism, which was religious in name only. When, at length, the old persecutions revived, which had previously scourged this part of the country, the very children resisted and suffered without complaint the persecutor's rage, even as had their fathers before them; some fanatics took to arms, and this, together with the violence of the priests, was one of the causes of the war of the Camisards. Fanaticism did not cease until regular worship was re-established according to the rites of the other Protestants of Europe."

"That," said the traveler, "is just what I should have predicted. When you had ministers, they exhorted you to patience and encouraged you to suffer martyrdom; they represented to you persecutors as the instruments of Providence, but since then you have recognized them as your enemies and have attempted to resist them by force."

"Sir, we detest their conduct even more than the violence that gave occasion to it, and now we regard flight from our country as the only proper reply to those who have caused us to hate it."

"However, gentlemen," persisted the young man, "you can not deny that the massing of multitudes such as yours,

has something of a criminal character. If the Catholics of England were to assemble contrary to law, the English Government would repress them, and it would do well."

"The comparison is not just," replied Ambroise. "I am from England, sir. The Catholics, truly, are not in a brilliant condition there, but they are tolerated; they have their priests, their houses of prayer, their meetings. They are not such fools as to go out into the deserts to seek what without hindrance, they have in the towns; but if they assembled in crowds in the fields, it is clear that it would not be in order to gain a liberty that they already have in the towns. Their meetings would be suspicious and would deserve to be put down. I have, however, seen Methodists assemble in the fields to worship after their own fashion, and I can assure you that the Government did not trouble itself about them, and it did well. If the Government had persecuted them, it would have doubled their number. Our assemblies are not the massing together of troops; and what is a proof that they are not seditious is the fact that we admit our wives and children and strangers into our meetings. The Government's suspicions are groundless, since we desire and pray for its prosperity. Let the Government tolerate us; let it authorize us; let the Christians of the eighteenth century grant to us what the Christians of the second century asked of the Roman emperors; and you will find that our assemblies will be the rendezvous of simple and pious people who will pray in French for their country and their king."

It was getting late; the travelers had still some distance to go before nightfall, and took their leave. The master of the house desired to show them some things about the neighborhood. They saw a newly built farmhouse, and near by some broken walls blackened by fire. He told them that this house had been demolished three or four times since

the time of M. de Rohan, and that it had finally been burned by the royal troops during the Camisard war. He pointed out, in the distance, two or three villages that had been burned also. "Some of these lands," said he, "are still lying waste since the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. From fear of the penal laws, we hardly dare to buy land, lest we should be compelled to abandon them. However, we have risked replanting our mulberry-trees, which have brought us in considerable gains. We are already furnishing a number of factories with raw silk. It is we who pay three-fourths of the taxes of these cantons; the taxes on our particular industry have been doubled in the last ten years. Ah! how much good would result from a thoroughly reliable policy of toleration, a toleration that would not be liable to be withdrawn by the caprices of a Government that alternately adopts and rejects such measures."

"Believe me," said the stranger, deeply moved, "that I shall lose no opportunity of speaking about you and making known your real character and purposes. All these evils hardly affect us when we hear about them at a distance, but what I have seen to-day I shall never forget."

The Protestants were consoled; the travelers were touched with the sufferings of which they had seen the evidences; they separated with many expressions of mutual respect and affection. Pity had arisen in the hearts of the visitors at the sight of suffering and the pathetic gratitude of the unfortunate people for those who had shown some interest in their lot.

CHAPTER XVII.

Ambroise at length settled down and began to feel himself safe from the shafts of misfortune. He had married and was happy in the enjoyment of the most perfect friendship he had ever known. One who has passed through many and severe troubles is qualified to appreciate happiness when it at length smiles upon him. But his sorrows were not yet ended: his wife was taken from him soon after he became a father. His strong and sensitive soul was plunged into the depths of despair. Nothing seemed to dissipate the cloud of gloom that oppressed his spirit. He was a prey to melancholy, and he would have become a misanthrope, disgusted with life, with men and society, had it not been for that paternal tenderness that led him constantly to the cradle where lay the memorial of his sweetest friendship and his deepest sorrow.

For a long time Ambroise denied himself to all visitors; he sought in religion the solace of his woe. Piety lent an element of tenderness to the strength of his character, and when, after long struggles, the consolations of religion prevailed, his heart was softened and tears came to his relief. He went to the cradle where lay his infant son, and found a peculiar happiness in tracing in the face of the child the features of the beloved mother, and he decided that he would conquer his sorrow in order to devote himself to the bringing up of the innocent child whose natural protector he was.

One day, as with tearful eyes he sat nursing the child, a notary entered his doorway, and, after the usual civilities,

handed him a legal document that Ambroise had great difficulty in reading. It was a summons calling upon him to renounce all rights and claims to the property and rights of the late Miss Sophie Robinel, seeing that she had never been his legitimate wife, etc. The horrible paper fell from his hands. The summons had been issued in the name of Sieur and Dame Robinel, father and mother of the deceased, who were under legal obligation to pay a dowry which they had not paid and which was now overdue. Although Ambroise was generous and had not dreamed of requiring the payment of his wife's dowry, he now felt that it was his son's property more than his own, and he did not feel that he should renounce that which was naturally his son's. The horrible character of the proceeding angered him. "For virtue's sake," said he, "one can make sacrifices; but shameful and vicious proceedings like this should be dealt with without flinching. God forbid that I should yield on a point like this, through weakness. I despise the riches, but I feel I ought not to dispose of them without consulting the just rights of my son."

It is necessary to explain to the reader that Ambroise had not been married in the church *catholique, apostolique et romaine,* which was also the case with four or five hundred thousand others who have become the parents of about two millions of children, all of whom, by the glorious laws of our land, are declared to be illegitimate, from a legal standpoint. With such laws as ours there can be no legal marriage except according to the canons of the Council of Trent. No marriage is valid except those at which the sacrament has been administered by a Romish priest, and such sacrament can be administered only to Roman Catholics. It follows, as a matter of consequence, that Roman Catholics are the only people who can legally marry. Ambroise, who did not view things quite in the same light, maintained

that the fact of the consent of the parents and of the parties constitute marriage, that the marriage contract reveals the conditions, that living together as man and wife is the public acknowledgment of the marriage, and the children that are born of the union are so many pledges of the validity of the marriage, that they are legitimate because there has been a real contract and all the conditions have been complied with, and the part that the priest takes in the marriage is simply to bless it in the presence of God and in the presence of witnesses. That is but common sense, as Ambroise maintained. But the lawyer laughed disdainfully at all these fine reasons deduced from natural right and from the spirit of the laws of all nations.

"It is not a question of common sense," said the lawyer. "You must remember that we are in France, and you will be judged according to French law. Now, French law requires you to be married by the Church of Rome, under penalty of nullification, and this is what you have not done."

"But how could I have done it," asked Ambroise, "if the priest can not administer the sacrament to heretics? The priest would not have married me."

"You had simply to embrace our religion."

"But that would have been impossible, since I do not believe in it. You certainly do not mean to say that I should have committed an act of hypocrisy and profanation?"

"No, for I should have despised you."

"What should I have done, then?"

"You should not have married."

"Ah, well, I suppose that that might have been possible; but then, do you maintain that twelve hundred thousand young men and twelve hundred thousand maidens should remain single? Shame on it, sir, you have there a perversion of morality, and it seems to me that your laws are framed to encourage immorality."

"That is no business of mine. There are cleverer men than I who seem to think that it is all right. In any case, it is no business of mine to defend our laws nor to reform them; it is simply my business to inform you that your marriage is not legal and that it will be nullified; your son will be declared illegitimate; he will have no title to inherit either his mother's property or yours."

"Well, sir, I will take the risk. At the worst it is only money I shall lose, for my honor is beyond the reach of the law; and as regards the honor and fortune of my son, I am well able to take care of them."

So Ambroise decided to defend the memory of his virtuous wife and the status of his son. He fortified his case with excellent opinions of distinguished lawyers, such as M. Elie de Beaumont; MM. Mariette and L'Oiseau; MM. Target and Gerbier; MM. Pascalis and Pazery, of Aix; of MM. Lacroix and Jamme, of Toulouse. He obtained an opinion of M. Servan, of Grenoble, and of the principal legal authorities in the kingdom. All gave it as their opinion that, as the Protestants were, by law, obliged to remain in the kingdom where they were permitted to enjoy the conditions of civil life, and not being able, as Protestants, to demand or obtain nuptial benediction of the priest, their only course, in order to marry, was to follow the usages of primitive society; that is to say, that the consent of the parents and of the parties and the living together as man and wife constituted for them a marriage, since the law could not mean that they should not marry.

Not satisfied with these opinions, Ambroise obtained opinions from various German universities, and especially from those schools where the study of natural law was a specialty, since natural law is the basis of all laws, though it must be admitted that many laws are considerably off the base. These German schools gave opinions even more

favorable, since, as Ambroise pointed out, they had no prejudices to influence their judgment. He wrote to Hungary, in which country there are eighteen hundred thousand Protestants, to ask if all these were illegitimate. The reply he received said, "No," and added sarcastically that in Hungary people were not clever enough to understand such subtle distinctions. Finally he wrote to Rome, whence come opinions that are supposed to regulate the universe; he asked what they thought there, or rather what they did about marriage, for there is no necessary connection between opinions and conduct. An old doctor of the Propaganda replied that while, as a matter of fact, they taught that the marriage consisted in the sacrament, yet at bottom he thought that a marriage was valid, even though deprived of sacramental grace, when it is contracted by those to whom the sacrament is refused; they recognize this in the case of Jews, who are very useful in bringing money and business into the country that has been stripped bare of its population and industries; that formerly they had instructed the Jesuits to compel the Protestants of France to marry before a priest, but that they had been led to change their policy in this respect when they saw that the only result was to populate and strengthen the heretical countries.

Furnished with this volume of authorities, and sustained by what he called the righteousness of his cause, Ambroise employed an eminent lawyer to conduct his defense. This man based a very eloquent argument on reason and sentiment. He presented with reason and force the arguments of the most celebrated legal authorities. His speech was frequently interrupted by applause from the large company that had assembled to hear the proceedings. Justice and Humanity, speaking to all hearts, evoked many stifled sobs, and some were melted to tears as they listened to the arguments. But the attorney on the other side pompously cited

the text of the law: he constantly brought back his eloquent adversary to the letter of the law. He gravely maintained that to-day there were no Protestants in France, because that in 1715 the law declared there were none. He went even so far as to state that it would be ruinous to the state if it changed the status of the two million illegitimate children in the country. He adroitly insinuated that this happy confusion gave rise to a great number of lawsuits which kept the courts busy. He convinced nobody, but Ambroise lost his cause. It was said that whilst the decision of the court was being pronounced the judges were visibly embarrassed, and sought to conceal the blush of shame with their handkerchiefs, and it was the popular belief that the judges looked more guilty than the defendant. The iniquitous law triumphed, the memory of Ambroise's wife was tarnished, and her son declared illegitimate and disqualified to succeed to his mother's inheritance. One can well understand Ambroise's indignation. "Let us return," said he, "let us return to that hospitable land where the rights of humanity are respected and guarded. And thou, unhappy child, who dost experience misfortune before knowing it, come seek a gentler land where thou wilt be permitted to enjoy the inheritance that my love has provided for thee."

That same evening Ambroise dined with two or three of his judges. They candidly admitted that the laws which condemned him did not agree with the eternal laws of nature, and that they were ashamed to be the administrators of such laws. "But, what can we do?" they said. "We are only the executors and not the interpreters of the law."

"What I would recommend you to do," replied Ambroise, "is to inform the king, who has been deceived, of the abominable nature of the laws that, in his name, you have to administer. Let him hear from all parts of his

kingdom the protesting voices of the magistrates who represent him, against the laws that oppress his subjects and render them unhappy. The opinions of the magistrature would be beyond suspicion, and he, doubtless, would restore to the unfortunates the rights of humanity, and it would be to his glory to have contributed to the happiness and welfare of his people." The historian may here pause to mention that not until fifty years later were the marriage laws adjusted so as to do justice to the Protestant portion of the population.

"I see, gentlemen," proceeded Ambroise, "that I have been very much deceived about my country, in judging it by the literature that came to me across the Channel. When I read in London so many speeches and articles about philosophy and humanity, I expected to find these grand theories in practice, but I still find the Protestants the victims of pitiless laws."

"What have you to grumble about?" interrupted, in an excited manner, an old man who sat on the opposite side of the table. "We are constantly hearing about the severity of the penal laws; but you know very well that they are not carried out. The judges are too indulgent and allow them to remain as dead letters. It is true that every now and then we see a preacher hanged or the corpse of a relapsed convert drawn through the mud; but formerly these were every-day sights. So, you see, sir, your complaints are unfounded and frivolous."

"What business have you with laws that are no longer put in execution?" asked Ambroise.

"We retain them as worthy monuments in our legislative archives and as models for future legislators, as being the best examples that they could follow. Moreover, we keep them on the statute-books so that we may put them into force when we have a mind to. If, unfortunately,

they should be revoked, the Protestants would indulge more than ever in the hope of a tranquility which they do not deserve, and which it would be absurd to concede to them; the exiles would return; they would go into business and into agriculture which are sufficiently flourishing without them; and our posterity would have good reason to blame us for making a big mistake. The Protestants are already as happy as they have any right to be, and, with the exception of liberty of conscience, the liberty to own property, safety of their persons, the free possession of their children, the choice of trades and professions, they are treated almost the same as the rest of the king's subjects."

The judges were silent because they saw very well that the rest of the company were inclined to take the view of the last speaker. All seemed to agree that the age of Louis XIV., with its strong-handed policy, was the model to be guided by. Talking of one thing and another, they at length deplored that there was no longer a Louvois or a Pere-la-Chaise to pursue, with regard to the Protestants, a policy that reflected eternal honor on the memory of those sagacious statesmen. Ambroise withdrew from the company, not caring to hear any more of this kind of talk; but the company continued to discuss various projects for restoring the glorious conditions of the past. The old man, excited with wine, proposed all sorts of ingenious methods for bringing back the miscreants into the bosom of the church. He was enthusiastic about massacres. He exulted in the massacres that had taken place in Ireland, in Bohemia, in Piedmont and in Calabria. For more than a hundred years stakes had flamed, gallows had groaned with the weight of heretics; there had been wheels and tortures and galleys. The entire table became excited. All agreed that the present times were degenerate; that the world was growing careless of religion. They spoke in

terms of what appeared to be deserved contempt of a policy of peaceable toleration of innocent opinions which could not anyway be suppressed. But, whilst praising persecution, they acknowledged that there was one difficulty. That, in doing so, they felt at the same time that they would have to approve the conduct of the Neros, the Deciuses, the Julians. But the old man speedily relieved them of that difficulty by alleging that the Romans had no right to persecute, because they were in error; but that the French had a right to persecute, because they were in the right. Everybody acknowledged the force of this unanswerable argument, and, having settled the problem to their entire satisfaction, the convives went home.

In the morning Ambroise was much surprised at receiving a visit from one of the convives of the previous evening. This man came to tell Ambroise that the old man who had spoken so viciously the previous evening had, on leaving the table, hired a post-chaise and proceeded immediately to Montpellier, and that he had good reason to suspect that this incensed partisan had gone there in order to procure a *lettre de cachet* against him. The Englishman, for Ambroise began to feel that he was more of an Englishman than ever, enquired what a *lettre de cachet* was. He was informed that it was an official order for his arrest and imprisonment without trial, or possibly without even knowing what he was charged with. On receiving this unwelcome intelligence, Ambroise started out the next day for England, taking his son with him.

Once more in London, he was visited by all his friends. He shed tears of joy at seeing them once again in a land of liberty. He readily acknowledged that one can not judge of a country by its books, and he declared that he would never again leave London. He kept his promise: he lived to reach the age of 103. His memory and intellectual

faculties were clear to the last. He often spoke of the long list of royal decrees that had been the cause of so much suffering to him and to others. They say, however, that his last thought was for France, and that he died repeating the names of Henri IV. and Louis XVI.

THE END.

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